

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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ED, THE ERRAND BOY; OR, WORKING HIS WAY IN THE WORLD.

By HOWARD AUSTIN
AND OTHER
STORIES



There, stretched upon the floor, lay Ben Bogley, white and still. Bending over him was Ralph Wyld, the bookkeeper. He was in the act of taking from the inside coat pocket of his young employer a package of greenbacks.

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Ed, the Errand Boy

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CHAPTER I.—The Mystery of Bagley, the Broker.

"Ed! Where the deuce is that boy? Oh, Ed!"

Mr. Ralph Wylde, bookkeeper, head clerk and general factotum for Bagley & Bagley, brokers, whose office was in an antiquated old building on the lower part of Broad street, in the City of New York, turned from his desk and looked around the room. He had shouted loud enough to be heard even above the "click-clack" of the typewriter, which was being rapidly worked by the nimble fingers of pretty Lizzie Liston, who was trying to get the day's correspondence written up. But there was no sign of any one answering to the name of Ed. In fact, there was no one in the office but the pretty typewriter and Mr. Wylde himself.

"Where's that boy, Miss Liston?" snapped the bookkeeper, in his crustiest tones.

"Ed's gone on your errand, Mr. Wylde," replied the typewriter.

"Errand! What errand! I sent him on no errand!"

"You sent him down on Wall street to Jeffreys & Black, to see about that hundred-share lot of C. B. Q. He has not had time to get back yet."

"Yes, he has! I remember now! He has had time to roll there and back twice over. He's never around when wanted."

Lizzie was silent. It was so every day. After Mr. Wylde went out to lunch he usually came back "loaded," as Ed expressed it, and always very cross. Such was the bookkeeper's condition now. Getting no satisfaction from Miss Liston, Mr. Wylde lit a fresh cigar and retreated into Mr. Bagley's private office.

"Send Ed to me the instant he comes in," he growled.

Click—clack! Click—clack! Click—clack! Lizzie's long, taper fingers continued their work. The keys rattled, the little bell tinkled, and the sheets came off the typewriter. Ten minutes elapsed. Then the office door was flung open and a bright-faced, curly-headed boy of some seventeen years came bounding in.

"Ed, you're wanted inside," said the typewriter, in a low tone.

"All right, Lizzie! Here I am!"

"Look out for yourself!"

"Hello! Is he at it again, Lizzie?"

"Yes; worse than ever. He's as cross as two sticks."

"He always is. Has Mr. Bagley come?"

"Not yet. You'd better hurry!"

It was always so at Bagley & Bagley's. Ed had been in the employ of the firm a year and had never seen it any different. Consequently he did not give the matter very much thought when he tapped on the door of the private office.

"Come in!" roared the bookkeeper. "Come in!"

Ed opened the door.

"What in thunder do you stand there knocking for? Where have you been all this time?" snarled the bookkeeper, as Ed walked in.

"You told me always to knock, sir."

"Shut up! Don't answer me back! Did you get that stock?"

"Yes, sir. Here it is."

"Put it down on the desk. Do you suppose I am going to get up and take it?"

Ed laid the stock down on the desk and was about to retreat.

"Stop! What do you mean by taking yourself off when I want you?"

Ed was silent. He had learned from experience not to answer back to Mr. Wylde.

"Take these papers to Cartwright & Co., No. 96 Duane street," snapped the bookkeeper, thrusting a package tied up in brown paper into the errand boy's hand.

Ed took the package and was just about to leave when the office door was darkened by a dissipated-looking young man of about twenty-five. He was swaying from side to side and appeared to be very much under the influence of liquor. Yet in spite of this there was something decidedly pleasant about his face.

"What's all this row about?" he demanded. "By thunder, Wylde, you make as much noise as though you were bossing a hundred men."

The bookkeeper jumped up and rubbed his hands obsequiously.

"It is only this infernal boy, Mr. Bagley," he said. "You don't know how hard it is to keep him up to his work."

"Rats! Ed's all right if you only speak him fair. You rush the boy to death. Don't make so much noise and things will go just as well. Now then, Ed, you get! Wylde, trot out the bottle and we'll have a drink. I want to talk business with you! Something's got to be done!"

This was the last Ed heard. For the agile errand boy, who was actually as lively and oblig-

ing a young fellow as one would meet in a day's walk, was always on hand and ready to do as he was told.

"Full again," he whispered to Lizzie, as he passed the typewriter.

But Lizzie only smiled. A moment later and Ed was running downstairs. Twenty minutes passed. Behind the closed door low voices could be heard talking. Then suddenly the door was flung open, and Mr. Ben Bagley came reeling out. Now Ben Bagley was all there was left of the old and respectable brokerage firm of Bagley & Bagley, generally understood to have been established "since the flood." In former years the house had been a very rich one, but of late, and particularly since the death of Ben's father, strange rumors had been in circulation. It was said that their credit was damaged, that business had left them, that the only Bagley remaining was a mere boy, and always drunk; that— But enough! Bagley & Bagley was not the house it used to be—that was sure.

"No, I won't do it—I won't! You can't make me do it!" shouted Ben Bagley. "I tell you, Wylde, your scheme is villainous! I'll expose you! I——"

"Stop!" cried the bookkeeper, who was pale with anger. "You forget yourself, Mr. Bagley. Miss Liston, you can go."

Lizzie was thoroughly frightened. Accustomed though she was to stormy scenes between Ben Bagley and his bookkeeper, she had never seen it quite so bad as this. Without a word she stepped to the closet, put on her hat and sack, and hurried from the office. Meanwhile, Ben Bagley had dropped into a chair, and sat with his face buried in his hands. Not a word was spoken before the pretty typewriter left. She hurried up Broad street to Wall, and up Wall to Broadway in a state of great agitation.

"If it were not for my poor mother I wouldn't stay with those dreadful men another day—not an hour," she murmured. "I never saw it so bad as——"

"Hello, Lizzie! Where are you driving to? They let you off early, it seems," said Ed.

It was a positive relief to Lizzie to see his honest face.

"Oh, Ed," she exclaimed, "they've been having a terrible row!"

"At the office?"

"Yes."

"I saw that Bagley was as full as a goat."

"There's something unusual the matter. Mr. Wylde sent me home."

"It's a shame. Wylde is a scoundrel! He has Bagley wound completely around his finger."

"It's terrible, Ed. It's my opinion that there is going to be serious trouble for us before long."

"I'm in trouble now, Lizzie."

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Matter is I couldn't find any such firm as Cartwright & Co., at 96 Duane street, and Wylde will give me fits unless— By George, there goes that infernal string!"

For as Ed spoke the parcel slipped from his hand and fell to the sidewalk. The string had come off and now the parcel lay open upon the pavement with its contents scattered around.

"Great Scott!" cried Ed, "why, there's noth-

ing in it but a lot of old letters addressed to the firm!"

And Ed gathered up the letters looking very much puzzled.

"It's my opinion that Mr. Wylde only wanted to get rid of you, Ed," said Lizzie. "You say you couldn't find the place?"

"Found the place fast enough, but there was no such people there."

"You better hurry back, and I must go home."

They parted then. Ed hurried back to the office. He had made quicker time by at least ten minutes than the bookkeeper had anticipated. But then there were few errand boys in New York who could make quicker time than Ed. Just as he was entering the building a loud crash of broken glass was heard upstairs, followed by the sound of a heavy fall.

"Great Scott!" cried Ed; "somethihng's busted!"

He was about to bound up the stairs in his usual fashion when something seemed to impel him to go slow. What had come over him? Ed could not tell, but certainly his sensations were very strange. It was getting dark now, for it was after four o'clock, and the time was but a week before Christmas when the days are short. Ed stole up the stairs to the second floor.

"By George, it's our office door!" he murmured.

It was so. The glass upon which the sign Bagley & Bagley, Stocks and Bonds, was painted had been shattered into a thousand pieces. Ed filled with the same strange sensations, the errand boy crept to the door and peered in through the break. It was a wonder that he could have kept silent at the sight which met his gaze. There, stretched upon the floor, lay Ben Bagley, white and still. Bending over him was Ralph Wylde, the bookkeeper. He was in the act of taking from the inside coat pocket of his young employer a package of greenbacks of large denomination.

On the outer bill of the bundle Ed saw the figures \$1,000, and he knew pretty well what that meant. The sight was startling! It was a shade too much for Ed. The boy gave a quick, gasping cry and drew back. Not soon enough to avoid being seen by Wylde, however. Dropping the money upon the body, the bookkeeper made one bound for the door. He had it open in a twinkling. Ed saw him coming and made a dash for the stairs. But he reached only the top step when Wylde's hand was upon his collar. He was jerked off his feet and dragged into the room.

"You young spy—you fool!" hissed the bookkeeper. "You will come back, will you? Take that for your pains!"

Suddenly the hand which held a saturated handkerchief came against Ed's mouth and nose.

If the errand boy's sensations had been strange before, they were stranger now. A sickly odor—a choking—a swimming brain! This was all that Ed the errand boy knew as he sank down—down—down upon the floor!

CHAPTER II.—Snatched Away.

"Help! Help! Thieves! Police! Police!" The window of Bagley & Bagley's office was

wide open. Out of the window leaned the aged scrub woman whose duty it was to keep clean the offices in the old Broad street building. She was making noise enough to wake the dead. The street fairly rang with her shrill cries. Now, in the great City of New York no such cries as these can be given without producing instant effect. The belated brokers hurrying homeward heard it. The hackmen waiting to be engaged in the middle of Broad street heard it. In short, it was heard by every one for a block around.

Among others who heard the cry was the policeman who was just coming out of the saloon on the corner. He quickened his pace and hurried with the crowd toward the door of the old building. The office was already well filled with people when he entered. The old woman was trying to explain. Now the policeman was a sensible fellow and up to his business. One glance showed him the situation.

On the floor, cold and still, lay the body of young Ben Bagley. There was a wound over the heart, and the man was to all appearance dead. Lying beside the body was another. It was Ed, the errand boy, quite unconscious. Between the two lay what the officer firmly believed to be the fatal knife.

"Get out of here! Get out of here, every one of youse!" he shouted. "Let no one—ah, Mr. Hall! Sure an' it's right glad I am that you've come."

The officer looked relieved. And well he might be, for the young man who had suddenly elbowed his way through the crowd was known to nearly all policemen on the force as one of the shrewdest detectives connected with the Central office. He was the one man in all New York that the officer most wanted to see.

"What's all this, officer?" demanded Harry Hall. "I was passing and saw the crowd——"

"An' glad I am that you were," interrupted the policeman. "Shure it has the look of murder. What's to be done?"

"Go around to Old Slip and fetch the captain at once."

"All right, sir!"

"If you see another officer on the way, send him up."

"It shall be done, sir."

The policeman hurried away, leaving Harry Hall in charge. Meanwhile the old woman had not been quiet a second, although no one had paid any attention to her.

"Come, friends! Come! You must get outside!" exclaimed the detective, showing his shield. "Mrs. Riodan, you seem to have something to say and you can stay and say it, but the rest of you must move on."

There was a tone of quiet command in the young detective's way of speaking which caused him to be at once obeyed. Harry Hall shut the shattered door and turned the key.

"What is it you are going to say?" he demanded of the woman.

"Sure an' I was tryin' to tell you——"

"Tell it, Mrs. Riodan! Tell it!"

"It's well you seem to know me, sir, Faith, an' I don't know that I ever seen you before."

"I know you—that's enough. Go on!"

"Well, sir, it's mesilf that's claned the office for Bagley & Bagley ever since the time of that

poor young man's grandfather, so it is. Oh, wurra! wurra! But it's a sad day whin——"

"Were you the first to discover this, Mrs. Riodan?"

"Sure I was, sir. I came in not two minutes ago——"

"Were things as we see them now?"

"Jist!"

"You have disturbed nothing?"

"Me! Sir, I want you to understand that I am an honest woman! Many's the chance I've had in this same office, but not a pinny! No, not half a wan! Me steal? Ah! bad cess to yez! Who, d'ye think I am?"

"She knows nothing," thought the young detective, bending over the body of Ben Bagley.

"He seems to be dead," he murmured, "and yet—ah! so you still live!"

It was Ed, the errand boy. Aroused from his drugged sleep at last, perhaps by the noise and Mrs. Riodan's shrill tongue, which was still wagging, Ed suddenly sat bolt upright, sprang to his feet and staggered back against the desk. But he would have fallen had not Harry Hall caught him and held him fast.

"Who are you, young man?" demanded the detective. "What does this all mean?"

Ed stared wildly.

"I—I work here!" he stammered. "I——"

"Come, brace up! Is this some of your work?"

"Mine? No—no!"

"Who is this man?"

"It's—it's Mr. Bagley, my boss."

"He has been stabbed. That knife—did your hand strike the blow?"

"No, no! Oh, how my head swims! Where is he—where is he? Ask him, if you want to know."

"Who? Who do you mean?"

But Harry Hall got no satisfaction from Ed. Suddenly the boy's face grew whiter. He reeled and his head fell heavily against the detective's shoulder.

"Confound it all! He's off again," muttered Harry Hall. "I don't seem to be getting much satisfaction here."

The words were scarcely uttered when the door was opened with a latch key, and three men came bustling in. They were the captain of the precinct, the policeman, and a man whom the detective did not know.

"Hello, Hall! So you've got him?" said the captain. "Hold on to him!"

"Mr. Wylde," he added, turning to his companion, "this is the boy, I suppose?"

"That is the boy," replied Ralph Wylde grimly, for the stranger was no one else.

"You charge him with the murder of Mr. Bagley?"

"I do. I have long been satisfied that he was a desperate character. See! He is so drunk now that he knows nothing. He stabbed his employer, and has robbed him. Too drunk to get away, his confederates abandoned him and made off with the money. He is a young villain. He is——"

"It is false! He is an honest boy!" cried a voice from the open doorway.

All turned and saw a young girl standing in the doorway, her face as pale as death.

"Bah! It's only my typewriter. She's stuck

on the young cub," sneered Wylde. "Better call the patrol wagon and take him in, captain. You see his condition. He cannot walk."

"I'll do it, Mr. Wylde," said the captain obsequiously. "Officer, ring up the patrol wagon."

"Captain, this boy is not drunk. He has been drugged," interrupted Harry Hall. "I'll stake my reputation that it's so."

"Nonsense!" snapped the captain. "You know nothing about it."

"Oh, indeed!"

"No, indeed! What right have you here, anyhow? Nobody asked your help."

"Very good, sir," replied the young detective stiffly.

He laid Ed down upon the floor and walked out. He had scarcely reached the door when there was a cry and a fall.

"Poor girl!"

"She's fainted!"

"She's dead!"

"Help her!"

"Get a doctor!"

"Call an ambulance!"

These were the exclamations which rang out through the hall.

"Confound it all, it's that typewriter girl!" snapped Wylde. "Let's see what's the matter, captain."

Both stepped into the hall where Lizzie lay upon the floor in a dead faint. The captain closed the door behind him. The next five minutes were devoted to Lizzie. Struggling back to life again, the girl burst into a flood of tears. It was in vain they tried to question her. Lizzie seemed unable to give a coherent answer. They were still at it when the policeman came hurrying upstairs and announced that the patrol wagon was at the door.

"Come, come!" cried Wylde. "Let us get the prisoner out of here! The girl knows nothing. Let her take care of herself."

"All right, sir! All right, Mr. Wylde; it's just as you say," said the captain, flinging open the office door.

Now Harry Hall was a silent witness to all this. He saw the captain enter the office, Wylde following him. He heard their exclamation of surprise.

"Heavens! The body is gone, and the boy with it!" the captain shouted.

There was no keeping the crowd out after that. They elbowed their way into the office, but there was nothing to see. Nothing—absolutely nothing. For the office was untenanted, even by the dead. The body of Ben Bagley had vanished. So had Ed, the errand boy. Their places upon the floor were vacant. Strangely, mysteriously, they had been snatched away.

CHAPTER III.—From Peril to Peril.

"On board with him! Quick! Quick!"

"O. K.! Pass him down! That's the talk!"

These words, spoken in suppressed tones, were the first heard by Ed the errand boy when consciousness came again. To Ed it was as though time had been utterly blotted out from the moment when he sank fainting into the arms of

Harry Hall until now. But it was rougher hands than Harry's that grasped him now. All that Ed knew he was being hurried along over what seemed to be a pier. It was very dark—too dark to see anything, but Ed could feel the air salt and fresh upon his bare head.

He knew he must be near the water even before the men who held him came to the bulkhead and the words quoted above were uttered. There was a tug lying alongside the bulkhead. Ed passed down to the deck where three roughly dressed men seized him and bore him into the little cabin. They threw him down upon the cushioned seat and the door was closed and locked.

"Is it safe to leave him there without gagging him?" he heard one of his captors say.

"Safe—yes!"

It was perfectly safe, for already Ed was off again; but it was not for long. In a short time he was himself again. The deadly drug had lost its effect. But in those few moments the situation had changed. Now the tug was plowing through the water. Ed sprang to his feet and shook himself.

"Great Scott! What scrape have I got into now?" he murmured, half aloud.

The words were scarcely spoken when a key was heard grating in the lock. With the memory of all that had occurred full upon him, Ed determined to play 'possum. He dropped upon the cushioned seat and lay perfectly still. It was well he did so. For now the door opened and in walked Ralph Wylde, followed by two men.

"Ha, ha! You stupid young meddler!" he muttered, shaking his fist at Ed as he strode up to him. "If I can't get rid of you one way, I will another. Here, overboard with him, boys! Chuck him into the bay!"

The two men seized him. Of course Ed was terribly frightened. But the errand boy was a splendid swimmer. He felt that he had rather take his chances in the water than with these fiends. He neither made a move nor a sound as the men carried him out on deck.

"Quick!" cried Wylde. "Don't lose a moment! Over with him and come for the other. I want to see this job done."

Splash! The words were scarcely spoken when Ed the errand boy was tossed from the tug and found himself struggling in the icy waters of New York Bay. Ed sank down out of sight in an instant. This to Ralph Wylde, who stood watching the result of his work, seemed highly satisfactory. But to Ed it was the luckiest moment of his life. Dangling from the stern of the tug was a rope. As Ed went under his hands struck it. The chill water had revived the boy. He was all alert. He clutched the rope and held on desperately. A moment later and Ed was half out of the water, being towed rapidly along at the end of the rope.

"By gracious! This is interesting!" gasped the boy. "But they didn't drown me for a cent!"

At the same instant a movement on the deck of the tug attracted his attention. Ed dropped lower in the water. It was too dark for those on the tug to see him. But the light behind the open door of the cabin showed him Ralph Wylde and the two men. Between them they held the body of Ben Bagley. Dead—no! Not dead!

"Spare me! Spare me, Wylde! I yield everything!" Ed heard his employer gasp.

"Over with him!" roared the villain.

Splash! It was done! Slam! went the door of the cabin. The light vanished. The tug went plowing off into the darkness and was soon lost to view. But Ed did not go with the tug. Brave Ed! Forgotten in an instant was his own perilous situation. He let go the rope and struck out boldly for the spot where he had seen Ben Bagley, struggling for all he was worth.

"Keep still! Keep still! Don't kick so, Mr. Bagley!" panted Ed.

"Ed! You?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Great heavens!"

"There, there! Let me hold you so! I can swim with one hand if you only won't kick."

He had him by the collar, keeping his head up. It was all the brave boy could do to sustain his burden. But Ben Bagley was no fool.

"I won't move, Ed! Save me, my boy, and I'll never forget it," he panted.

"Can you swim?"

"Not a stroke."

"But you can keep still."

"Yes, yes!"

"Keep your legs out stiff. The shore is not far away."

"I see it. Where are we, Ed?"

"That's Communipaw where you see the lights," replied Ed, who knew the bay and its surroundings like a book.

"The tug must have struck right across, then."

"Yes."

"Ed, can you make it? Will your strength hold out, my brove boy?"

"It will, sir, if you will only keep quiet."

"Save me, Ed! Save my life that I may be revenged on Ralph Wylde, and I'll be a brother to you to the end of time!"

Ed made no answer. He was not quite sure that he wanted Ben Bagley for a brother. Still he struggled bravely on. The distance was not great. The tug had struck across the bay running between Ellis Island and the Jersey shore. Why Ralph Wylde should have chosen such a spot for his foul work Ed could not understand. Yet there they were—the errand boy knew the place perfectly. Moments passed. Still the struggle continued.

Ed felt his strength going, and it might have gone altogether but for the fact that hope was ahead. For the darkness was broken by a faint light shining within a few feet of them.

"It's an old canal boat!" gasped Ed. "We shall make it, Mr. Bagley. Just a moment more!"

"Better call for help," said Ben.

"No. Here we are!"

"Thank Heaven!"

"Here! Brace up now. I shall have to drop you. I—hello, here's the bottom right under our feet!"

It was ebb tide. At ebb tide the beach at Communipaw is laid bare for a long distance out. There was no danger now.

"Can you stand?" asked the errand boy.

"Yes—yes!"

Ed let go his hold. The canaler was right before them and they waded through the mud and

shallow water to her side over which a rope hung dangling. Ed caught the rope and pulled himself up.

"Come on!" he called to Ben Bagley.

Ben for a supposed dead man was pretty lively. He grasped the rope and came up the side of the canaler like an old sailor.

"Hark!" breathed Ed.

The light shone from the little window in the cabin of the canaler. As they listened a curious clinking sound as of metal striking metal met their ears.

"I don't like this," breathed Ben, who was shivering with the cold. "We'd better get away in a hurry, Ed, I think—ah, too late!"

For at the same instant a dark form had suddenly risen on the deck. It was a boy. Behind him came another. Both wore masks over their eyes and carried revolvers. Instantly these were cocked and leveled at Ed and Ben Bagley, as a shrill whistle rang out upon the night.

"Don't yous stir a peg or yous is goners!" hissed one of the masks.

At the same instant up from the little cabin a dozen more masked forms came knocking. They crowded around Ben Bagley and Ed.

CHAPTER IV.—The Mysterious Hands.

"Back! Back! Stand back!"

So shouted Ben Bagley, as the masked boys on the old canaler came crowding around himself and Ed.

"Back nothing!" growled the biggest boy in the crowd. "What you two blokes mean by comin' aboard dis boat widout no one askin' yer? We'll learn you to mind your own bizness. Let 'em have it, fellers! Let 'em have it for fair!"

Again they made a rush for Ben and Ed. But Ben Bagley seemed to have grown singularly cool.

"Back! Back, I say!" he cried, throwing himself in front of Ed, for one of the gang had just raised a heavy sandbag to strike the boy. "We don't want the white dogs, but that's no reason we should be slugged, Bilk Brown!"

These words produced instant effect.

"What ter deuce! Who are you?" growled the leader of the masks, falling back.

"Look at me!"

"Hully Chee! It hain't de boss?"

"Look at me, I say. Look at me!"

Mr. Bilk Brown peered into Ben Bagley's face.

"It is de boss!" he gasped. "Say, I didn't know yer. Why didn't you give the word when you came aboard?"

"Because I didn't know I was coming aboard here."

"You've been in de water?"

"Yes. I've met with an accident. I fell off the tug."

"Hully chee! Dat so?"

"Yes."

"An' der kid?"

"Jumped overboard and saved my life."

"Bully for him! But, say, it won't do, you know."

"Of course it won't do, Bilk," said Ben Bagley emphatically, "and I don't intend to try to make

it do; but the kid must have some dry clothes, and so must I."

"You shall have 'em, boss."

"And if you've got any whisky down in the cabin, a nip might not be bad for either of us."

"Dere's loads, but——"

"That's all right; I'll go down and get it. Come on, Bilk."

And away went Ben Bagley, followed by Mr. Bilk Brown. They made a dive through the bulkhead door which communicated with the cabin of the old canaler and disappeared, leaving Ed lost in wonder over the sudden change of situation which had taken place. The boys crowded about him. Out through the holes in the masks their eyes gleamed threateningly. But they said nothing. Evidently they stood in awe of Mr. Bilk Brown. As for Ed, he also kept silent. He half expected to be sandbagged and dumped into the bay. Dark hints of Ben Bagley's wild doings, which had reached his ears, now came flashing through his brain. What was the mystery of this old stranded canaler! Just then the future looked very dark to Ed.

In a few moments Ben Bagley returned. He was accompanied by Bilk Brown, who still wore his mask. Ben had put on dry clothes. They were coarse and ragged, and gave him the appearance of a laborer. He carried others over his arm, and a whisky flask in his hand.

"Here, take a nip of this, boy. It will do you good," he said, passing the flask over to Ed.

"No; I don't want it," replied the errand boy.

"Take it. It won't hurt you!"

"I never tasted liquor in my life, and I ain't going to begin to-night."

"Haw, haw, haw!" laughed the young masks.

They seemed to think it a capital joke. But Ben Bagley stood by Ed.

"All right. You shan't touch it if you don't want to," he declared. "But strip yourself and put on these clothes."

"I'd rather not."

"Nonsense! These fellows won't hurt you! Send 'em off, Bilk, if the boy is bashful!"

"Say, you blokes; get below!" growled Bilk. "Hully chee! What are you all crowding round here for, anyhow? Get below!"

In a moment the gang had vanished, leaving nobody on the deck but Ben Bagley and Bilk.

"Now, then, Ed," said the banker kindly, "you must change your clothes."

Ed held out no longer. He stripped off his wet garments, and flung them upon the deck. He was fairly blue with cold, and trembling like a leaf. Seeing this, Ben Bagley and Bilk took the boy in hand and rubbed him until the blood began to circulate. Ed then dressed himself and was something like the old Ed again. All this time Ben Bagley kept looking off into the fog. He seemed very uneasy, and very anxious to be on the move. He even insisted upon helping Ed to dress, and evidently with the idea of helping matters along. Done at last, he turned to Bilk.

"Who'll go?"

"I will."

"Good! I'd rather have you than any one else."

"All right, boss! Come on."

Bilk led the way to a narrow plank which had been thrown over to the dock of another canal

boat. They crossed the plank and passed over three boats, and coming then to the shore.

"You needn't go any farther," said Ben. "I can get along now."

"All right, boss."

"And, Bilk!"

"Hello!"

"You won't forget?"

"Nixey!"

"How about the others?"

"If any of de oders open deir jaws I'll do 'em for fair."

"Enough said. Good night!"

"Night!" growled Bilk, and he turned and ran back across the boats.

"Follow me, Ed," said Ben Bagley shortly.

He started up the muddy stretch of beach, for the tide was now out. Ed trotted after him, filled with perplexity. If he had dared, he would have run away. But the boy was somewhat afraid of Ben Bagley. Besides, it was very dark and he had no idea whatever where to go.

"I suppose you are wondering what all this means?" asked Ben, after they had gone a short distance.

"Yes, sir."

"I knew it! You expected to be killed that time."

"Yes, sir."

"And you would have been only for me. They are a wild set."

"You seem to know them?"

Ben frowned darkly.

"Yes, I know them. Even I could not have saved you if that scoundrel Wylde had come."

"You expected him?"

"I did."

"He'll come before morning probably?"

"I don't see why he ain't there now. Of all the places on the face of the earth we could have picked out to land in to-night, that was the worst. Still you didn't know that."

"No, sir."

"And it's all right. I'm under everlasting obligations to you. Let's see—what's your other name, Ed?"

"Green, sir."

"Green, eh? Upon my word, you're anything but green. You'll make your mark in the world, that's sure."

"I do my best, sir."

"You do. Look here; we ain't through with our troubles yet, I'm afraid."

"How so?"

"I can't explain, but you'll know later. Remember this: Keep a stiff upper lip and speak the truth, and it will all come out right in the end."

There was more mystery in Ben Bagley's words. Ed felt very uneasy. He would have given anything to break away and get home as best he could. But he did not like to do that, and just then they came to a large frame structure, in front of which Ben Bagley paused. It was certainly a very singular-looking house.

Behind it stretched the Jersey marshes; in front was the bay. Distant lights shone dimly through the fog, but there was no other house near. Leading up to the front door was a high frame stoop, and there was another door communicating with the basement. The house was an-

tirely shut up and wore a deserted air. Every window was concealed behind heavy wooden shutters. Not a light shone. There was something in the very air of the place which made Ed shudder, though he knew not why. It seemed to effect Ben Bagley in much the same way. He looked up at the old structure in silence. Then, with the air of a man who had resolved upon some desperate deed, he turned to Ed.

"Go up the stoop and wait for me at the front door," he said.

"Shall you be long?" asked Ed.

"I think not. At all events, wait, and upon no account get excited whatever occurs."

"I'd rather go home, Mr. Bagley."

"I'd rather you wouldn't. Still, I shall not force you."

"I'd rather go."

"Ed."

"Sir?"

"Understand me; I am very grateful to you."

"Yes, sir."

"I tell you, boy, your whole future depends upon yourself. My advice to you is to obey me, but do as you choose if you are afraid."

"I'm not afraid!" cried Ed. "What is there to be afraid of?"

Ben Bagley had touched him upon the weak spot. He ran up the stoop and took his station at the door.

"All right. Stay right there until I come," said Ben, diving in under the stoop.

Ting-a-ling! Ed heard a jangling bell sound through the house. Was the door opened in answer? He did not hear it. After a moment he bent over the railing and looked down. Scarcely had he done so when he heard the door open behind him. He turned in a hurry, and a wild cry broke from his lips. For out of the darkness behind the open door Ed saw two hands with enormously long arms suddenly thrust. He could see nobody. Only the hands and arms. In a twinkling they had clasped themselves around the boy's body and were pulling him with irresistible force toward the open door.

"Help! help! Save me!"

One wild cry rang out upon the silence of the night. Slam—bang! The big door was shut; the stoop was vacant. Ed the errand boy had disappeared.

CHAPTER V.—Captured Again.

"Help! Save me! Help!"

Inside of a closed door of the mysterious house Ed the errand boy again raised his voice in one wild, pathetic appeal for help. He was not calling to empty air. The hall behind the door was brilliantly lighted, and there before him stood Ben Bagley, looking very pale. Besides Ben, Ed could see nobody. The hands which grasped him at the door were removed now. Ed saw them vanish through two holes in the partition alongside the door. At the same instant a tall man, wearing a black mask, appeared in front of him.

He seemed to rise up through the floor, and at the very feet of the frightened boy. In one hand he held a cocked revolver; in the other a long, glittering knife. No wonder Ed's terror was in-

creased. No wonder he raised his voice in one wild cry for help.

"If you do it, by Heaven, you shall rue it!" cried Ben Bagley, with a coolness which Ed had never before seen him display.

"It must be done! It shall be done!" hissed the mask. "You have no right to bring a stranger here."

"I tell you he saved my life."

"What difference? You know the rule of this house."

"And you know me. Beware!"

The mask seemed to hesitate.

"Keep cool, Ed," said Ben Bagley. "Keep cool, my boy; your life must and shall be spared."

"I don't know about that," growled the mask. "I have my orders. It may cost me my own life if I fail to carry them out."

"I'll protect you."

"You?"

"Yes, even I."

"But can you do it?"

"I can."

"I doubt it, Ben."

"I can—I will! Let the boy live!"

"Well, so be it. What is your object in bringing him to this house?"

"I cannot explain to you; but I will to you know who."

"He will not see you."

"Yes, he will."

"But you know him. He has not been visible for weeks."

"He will see me."

"I doubt it; but you can try."

"Good! Raymond, you shall not regret this! Let me write."

"Step in here and you will find pen and paper," said the mask.

He flung open a door behind where Ed was standing, and ushered them into a large room, furnished most luxuriously and in true oriental style. It was a revelation to Ed. Never in his life had the boy seen anything like it. Ben bade him be seated, and, walking to a small desk on one side of the room, sat down and hastily dashed off a few lines.

"Raymond" took the envelope in which the missive was inclosed and vanished. Ben Bagley hastily arose and closed the door.

"Ed," he whispered, "do you trust me as your friend now?"

"I ought to."

"You ought, indeed. He would have killed you but for me."

"I believe it."

"Trust me a little longer. Give yourself up to circumstances and I will make you rich—very, very rich!"

"Not if I am expected to do anything that ain't straight, Mr. Bagley."

"It's all straight, I assure you."

"I'd rather go home. My mother——"

"Your mother shall be taken good care of. For her sake, do as I tell you. Think of what you can do for her with your pockets full of money!"

"But——"

"You must! Your life depends upon it! Hush! Here he comes!"

It was Raymond returning.

"He will see you," he said simply.

Ben's eyes glistened.

"All right. Stay here until you are sent for, Ed."

With these words, Ben Bagley vanished, and Raymond with him. The door was closed and Ed left alone. For some moments he stood motionless in the middle of the room.

"I won't do it. I've had enough of it!" he murmured. "Now is my time. I'm going to get out of this house. I'm going home!"

But he did not. He did not even get out of the room. When he tried the door he found that it had been securely locked on the other side. Ed flew to the windows. But here again he was baffled. The sashes were nailed down, and through the glass he could see that besides the shutters, each window was secured by heavy iron bars. It was no use. He had to give it up.

For fully half an hour Ed paced up and down the floor, his fears increasing with every succeeding moment, as he waited for Ben Bagley's return. But no one came. Worn out at last with waiting, Ed sank down upon a satin-covered divan. Not to sleep—oh, no! He was resolved that nothing should tempt him to close his eyes. And yet the next the boy knew daylight was streaming through the cracks of the shutters. After all, he had slept. The night had passed. Morning had dawned and the situation remained unchanged. Ed jumped up and shook himself.

"What in the world! Have I been asleep?" he muttered. "Is it morning? Hasn't Mr. Bagley been back yet?"

Ed listened intently. Not a sound was to be heard. Moments passed. At last he heard a footstep in the hall outside. The door was opened. But it was not Ben Bagley who appeared. To Ed's horror, there stood Ralph Wylde.

"Ha, ha, ha! So you are here, are you?" he hissed. "So you did not find the watery grave I intended you should? Well, no matter. We can finish the job just as well now as——"

But Ralph Wylde did not even finish his sentence. Ed, the errand boy, was not the sort to stand idly by and wait to be killed. Biff! whack! thud! He made one rush at Wylde. Twice he hit him. Once between the eyes. Again under the chin. The villain measured his length upon the floor. It was well done. A prettier knock-out one never saw. Ed lost no time. He could hear footsteps approaching along the hall. Dashing to the front door, he hastily let down the heavy chain which secured it, and turned the key. He slammed the door behind him and started down the high stoop on the run. Escape looked easy now. But it was not to be. As the boy ran he suddenly saw a crowd shooting around the corner of the house. It was a gang of ragged, ill-looking boys. Probably the boys from the old canaler, Ed thought, although they were no longer masked.

"Dat's him!"

"Dat's de kid!"

"Slug him!"

"Do him!"

"Don't let him get away!"

"He's the fellow de boss wants!"

Such were the cries, as the boys came crowding about him. Had Ben Bagley betrayed him? Ed could scarcely think otherwise. He caught up

a long stick—a piece of driftwood, which lay on the beach, and prepared to defend himself.

"I'll brain the first fellow who lays a hand on me!" he shouted.

One made a rush for him even as he spoke.

Whack! Whack!

"Hully chee! I'm done!" cried the fellow, as he went sprawling upon the sand.

Whack! Another tried it, and got his dose.

"Come on! Come on! I'm good for the whole lot of you!" cried Ed, flourishing his stick about his head.

At the same instant the voice of Wylde was heard shouting from the top of the stoop:

"Ten dollars to the boy who captures him; but he must not be hurt!"

There was a grand rush then. All hands crowded upon poor Ed. It was too much. He was borne down to the ground by twenty hands.

"Hold him!" cried Wylde, as he came running up.

"We've got him, boss!" said the one who had Ed by the throat.

The voice was that of Bilk Brown.

"Good! Take him to the boat. Don't hurt him. I have use for him. Take him along."

They seized Ed between them and in spite of his struggles bore him along the beach. The sun was just rising when they passed him up upon the deck of the first of the canal boats.

"Hurry! Hurry! We shall be seen!" breathed Wylde. "Hurry, boys! Get him to the den!"

CHAPTER VI.—The Tattooed Cross.

"Lay him down!"

"All right, boss."

"Is the door fastened?"

"Tight's a drum, boss."

"No alarm?"

"Nary."

"Good! Now, then, Bilk, this is the same boy who came aboard here last night."

"Yair."

"Sure!"

"Dead sure?"

"Where is the boy who you say can do the job?"

"It is Denny Shea."

"Call him."

"We'll want a couple of others."

"All right. Bring down two more."

"Say, boss?"

"Well, Bilk."

"I done right last night in helping 'em along, didn't I?"

"Certainly."

"I hadn't no way of knowing dat dere had been a row between you two."

"Certainly not."

"Dey didn't kill him, did dey?"

"Now look here, Bilk, don't you go too far. Mind your own business, my boy."

"Done! Mind it is."

"Go on and get the boys."

Bilk vanished, leaving Ralph Wylde and Ed, the errand boy, alone. The scene was the cabin of the old canaler. Ed lay upon the floor, tied hand and foot. Whatever might have been the

reminiscent basket in a corner. The night before, there was no trace of it now. A table, a green mirror of wood, a clock, and a few other odds and ends constituted the furnishing of the place. Bilk sat at a table and began packing up and down.

"Hey, Ed, you're a smart one," Bilk remarked.

"I always did the best I could for you, Mr. Wylde."

"You did."

"I don't see why you should say so."

"I did that on the spur of the moment—you know why."

"No, I don't."

"Bah! As though you were so good! You wouldn't say so to me if I were your father."

"Well, perhaps."

"There is no reason why I should say so. I did it for you, and you know that I should have done by any one else in the same circumstances; but now——"

"Let me go, Mr. Wylde! Let me go!"

"Not much!"

"I'll keep out of the way! Now that I know Mr. Bagley isn't dead, I shan't go near the post."

"Ain't dead? Ha! he may thank you for that. No, no; I've got a letter for you. — Where are they come?"

The bulkhead door opened, and down into the cabin Bilk Brown and three other boys came tumbling. Bilk looked at Ed. He had not the faintest idea what was to be done with him, nor did he fear the worst. But Ed the errand boy engaged his brain for an hour to guess Bilk Wylde's intentions. He would not have succeeded.

"Come, now! You understand what I want, Shea?" were Wylde's last words.

"Bilk says you want me to do a lot of things," said Shea, who seemed to be more intelligent than Bilk or the other boys.

"Yes."

"I'm a good hand at that."

"Show me some of your work."

"Bilk can show you."

Bilk with an air of pride, pulled out a piece of paper and exhibited an extraordinary tattooed design in blue and red.

"That's good!" exclaimed Wylde. "How long does it take to heal?"

"Bout a week or ten days."

"Good again! Now, Shea, show what I want you to do in to tattoo over the back a design like this."

Thus saying, Wylde drew a folded note from his pocketbook. He did not look at Ed. Had he done so, he would have seen that a singular change had come over the boy's face.

"It's a cross with the letters 'E-H-B'—and it is—looked in at the angles," said Bilk, looking at the design.

Ed's face grew paler still.

"That's it," said Wylde. "Now get to work!"

The boy turned to Ed.

"It won't be any use for you to go that to Mr. Wylde," said Bilk, in a hurried voice.

"What do you need?" demanded Wylde to Bilk.

"What I say."

"Put him on the table! Get to work!"

It would have been useless for Ed to have attempted resistance, even if he had thought of it. He was held by Bilk and the two boys. Meanwhile Bilk began getting his knife out ready. The boys were holding a plate Bilk and the others stripped off Ed's jacket and shirt.

"You want to put it right here," said Wylde, seizing Ed.

His eyes rested upon the boy's bare back.

"Now, Bilk, get to work!"

The boys stood in amazement.

"What's the matter?" said Ed. "Tell me what you are doing."

"I'll show you," answered Wylde, turning at the boy's remark.

"You'll show me the best thing on his back at all?" asked Bilk.

"It's all right," Wylde said. "There was tattooed a small cross. It's the same as the ones were the mysterious letters given above."

"How came this here?" demanded Wylde.

"I don't know."

"You lie!"

"I tell you I don't know."

"Where you know that? Your mother knows your father——"

"My father died before I was born. I have asked my mother, but she would not tell me what it meant or how it came there."

"Ye gods! It's the boy himself!" muttered Wylde.

He turned and hastily left the cabin. Nor did he see him again until long after the sun went down. Meanwhile nothing occurred. Bilk told him to dress, and he was tied up again. All that day and far into the night Bilk the errand boy, remained a prisoner in the cabin of the canaler. The doctor in his situation came shortly after midnight. He was asleep at the time, and was awakened by being roughly shaken by Bilk Brown.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Bilk.

"I'm all right," said Ed, who was now awake.

"There's no answer," Bilk said. "You're all right, but you're not on the back. There's a small cross tattooed on the old canaler. It's the same as the one on the back."

"What's the cross?" asked the doctor, in a suppressed voice.

Ed was terribly frightened.

"Let me go, Mr. Wylde! Let me go!" he pleaded.

"Don't go, you're not well. It would be the second time you've been ill. Stay here and make no fuss and I'll see that you are well rewarded for all you have been through."

There was no answer. But Bilk could not resist the temptation of a second design. It was no time to go to bed, he thought. He had a lot of mysteries. They lowered him into the boat. Bilk and the others followed. Taking up the oars, they pulled away from the old canaler and in a moment were shooting through the water toward the bay.

The boat landed on the other side and Ed was taken out. He was a little worse than before. There was a small cross tattooed on his back. From the time Wylde was taken to the old canaler, and he looked sharply at him and a good deal of he had a tattooed

mark on his body, describing it. Ed told him he did and showed him the Nullius Filius mark, meaning nobody's son.

"He is your missing grandson, Mr. Framingham," said Wylde. "Now give me the secret of the hidden money."

"No. Does your mother live yet, boy?" asked the old man.

"Yes, sir."

"Bring her to me, then."

The old man now sank back on the bed.

"Dead, by the eternal!" breathed Wylde. "Dead and with the secret not disclosed."

But the old man was not dead, and after Wylde left, he rose to his feet and told Ed to follow him, which the boy did.

The old man went to the shore, where there was a big rock and told Ed to lift up a large stone near it.

The boy did so and found a small box, which the old man told him to take and bid him begone. Ed went to the shore, found a boat there and rowed across the bay. He went to his home, but found the place deserted. His mother had moved away, having found out that Ed had met his death from his neighbors.

Ed now opened the box and found it contained a draft on the Brewers bank for \$750,000.

Ed did his best to find his folks, but did not succeed. He took a room on the Bowery and started out to look for work.

One day he came across Harry Hall, the detective, who told him he must come to the Old Slip police station with him, and Ed went.

CHAPTER VII.—"Wanted: An Errand Boy."

"Go!"

"I'm going."

"Be brave! Have no fear!"

"I'll fight it out, you bet. He'll not get the best of me."

"I'll bet he won't. That boy is good for Ralph Wylde every time," said Harry Hall, turning to the captain of the Old Slip station.

This was the boy in question slid out through the door. Was it Ed the errand boy of whom they were speaking? Certainly he did not look much like Ed. Ed had brown hair, inclined to curl. This boy's hair was red, and stood up short and straight all over his head. So also were the eyebrows different, and as for the clothes—why, Ed had never owned so good a suit in all his life. Yet after all it was Ed—Ed in disguise. Disguised by Harry Hall's skillful hand.

And what did it all mean? Simply that Ed had told Harry Hall his whole story. Harry told the Police Captain at the Old Slip station. The Police Captain at once telephoned headquarters and told the Inspector. The result was that Ed was taken up to Mulberry street. A long and careful questioning followed, and in the end Ed was turned over to the care of Harry Hall. Next day Harry took him early to the Old Slip station. Ed was the old Ed when he entered. Fifteen minutes later he left the station, as we have described.

He hurried up Old Slip to William street, and

along William to Exchange Place, and thence into Broad street. It was at the foot of the well-remembered stairs leading up to Bagley & Bagley's office that the boy paused at last. He took from his pocket a printed slip. It had been cut from a morning paper.

"WANTED—A good reliable boy for errands. Apply to Bagley & Bagley, No. — Broad Street."

This was the way the advertisement read. Ed's heart beat like a trip hammer as he ascended the stairs.

"It's a big risk, but I guess I can cheek it out," he murmured. "If old Wylde don't know me—that's all."

What was the boy up to? Was he about to play detective? What he did was to walk boldly up to Ralph Wylde and apply for his own place. He came! He saw! He conquered! Ed was an errand boy once more.

"If you do well, I'll advance you rapidly," said Wylde, upon engaging him. "Let me see, what did you say your name was, young man?"

"Sam Maxwell, sir."

"Good! Will you go to work now, Sam, or come to-morrow morning?"

"I'll go to work now, if you please, sir."

"Good again! You're the right stuff, duff, right in, you'll be a partner in the house one of these days."

And Ed did duff right in. For four days he worked hard. He gave perfect satisfaction, of course. And why not? No one knew the ways of Ralph Wylde than he did. So the days came and went. Every night Ed was met at a certain corner by Harry Hall.

"Any news?" was the detective's invariable question.

"None," Ed would always answer.

"Poor Lizzie! I fear it is all up with her," remarked Harry one night, as he was about to turn away.

"You have found no trace of her, Mr. Hall?" inquired Ed anxiously.

"None—absolutely none from the moment I saw that carriage drive away as I told you. Fool that I was to let myself be so trapped."

"Wylde is sharp, Mr. Hall."

"No sharper than other men; I was dull—that's all."

"Perhaps I'll be able to learn something to-morrow."

"Let us hope so."

"You have no news for me, Mr. Hall?"

"None."

"What do the bank people say?"

"That they will do nothing without an order from Mr. Framingham."

"And you have no news of Mr. Framingham?"

"I cannot get the slightest trace of him, but let us hope for the best, Ed. The police will soon be ready to move. Meanwhile, remember you are acting bravely, my boy. You are doing what all of us have to do, working your way in the world. They parted then to meet at the same place next night.

Again the old question. This time Ed's answer was different. And Harry Hall fully ex-

pected, it. The boy's eyes were ablaze with excitement.

"I've got something now, Mr. Hall!" he exclaimed.

"Good! What is it?"

"I've got a letter to deliver."

"Where?"

"At the house over in Communipaw."

"Hello!"

"Yes. Wylde was drunk to-day—full as a goat. Just at night he gave me this."

From his pocket Ed drew a letter. The address was very brief. Just "J. F." Nothing more.

"He told you where to go?" questioned Harry.

"Yes."

"You've got a big chance, my boy."

"How so?"

"If you can gain the evidence against these scoundrels which the inspector desires, it will be the making of you."

"I shall do my best, sir."

"You always do. Come, we'll start at once."

"Are you going, too?"

"Do you think I would let you go alone?"

"I don't think there is any danger. Wylde told me not to be frightened at anything that might happen. He said they were funny folks in that house, but it would be all right."

"Ha, ha! You know just how funny they are, Ed."

"Don't I! But I'm glad you are going, for to tell the truth, I didn't care much about trying it."

"We'll start now," said the detective. "Keep a stiff upper lip, Ed. I say again you've got a big chance."

But it took all Ed's courage when at last he found himself ascending the steps of that mysterious old house. Harry Hall was not visible now. But Ed knew that the detective was watching every move he made. So the errand boy rang the bell boldly. He was on the alert, however. As before, the door was instantly opened. As before, there was no one visible when it moved back.

CHAPTER VIII.—Ed's Visit to the Mysterious House.

Ed needed all the courage he could muster just then. For footsteps were heard coming along the dark hall. Presently the well-remembered face of Raymond came into view. Ed stood leaning against the railing carelessly, waiting.

"Well, who are you? What do you want?" growled Raymond.

"I came from Mr. Wylde with a letter for J. F. I am his errand boy."

"Oh, you are, eh?"

"Yair."

"Where's the letter?"

"In my pocket. Are you J. F.?"

"No. Trot it out."

"No, boy!"

"What in thunder ails you? Thought you said—"

"So I did."

"Now, lookey here, boy, don't you get too

fresh, or you'll find yourself in trouble! Trot out that letter!"

"Not much!"

"What's the reason you won't?"

"Because I make it a rule to obey orders if I break owners. This letter is addressed to J. F."

"What are your orders?"

"To give that there letter to J. F., and nobody but J. F."

Muttering something inaudible, Raymond vanished into the darkness, banging the door in Ed's face. Ed looked back. Out from behind the tree came Harry Hall's encouraging hand again. Ed waited. After a short wait back came Raymond.

"You can come in, boy," he said, in a surly tone.

And then for the second time Ed entered the mysterious house. His heart beat wildly. To say that he was not afraid would be to say what is false. But he had no idea of turning back. He gave no sign of fear. Raymond hurried along the hall leading the way up a long flight of stairs. Here a hanging lamp shed a mellow light. Raymond knocked at the nearest door.

"Come in!"

Ed started. The voice was that of a very old man. Moreover, it was very much like the voice of Mr. Framingham. Still it was not the same. Raymond flung open the door. Even greater was Ed's surprise when he entered the room which was handsomely furnished as a library. Seated at a desk pulled out from the wall beside an open grate fire was an old man the very counterpart of Mr. Framingham. Ed stared at him in amazement. It was Mr. Framingham and it wasn't.

There was an astonishing resemblance. Yet Ed could see marked points of difference. Moreover, this man was strong and healthy-looking. He looked like a person who had never known a day's sickness in his life. Still he seemed certainly Mr. Framingham. Ed was sure of it. But he wisely kept his thoughts to himself. For a few moments the old man kept on writing in silence. Then he laid down his pen, and, wheeling around, looked at Ed.

"Is this the boy?" he demanded.

"This is the boy," said Raymond.

"Well, boy, what do you want?"

"Mr. Wylde sent me here with a letter, sir—I'm his errand boy."

"Well—well! Where's the letter?"

"I was to give it to J. F., sir."

"I am J. F. The letter is intended for me."

Ed handed it over. Hastily the old man tore open the envelope and perused the contents of the letter. His face grew dark as he read.

"You may leave us, Raymond!" he exclaimed. "Boy, sit down. I have an answer to write to this."

Raymond left the room sulkily. For the next few moments the only sound was the scratching of the old man's pen. At last he finished. Folding up the letter, he enclosed it in an envelope and handed it to Ed.

"Go," he said sternly. "Give that to Mr. Wylde. Raymond will meet you outside this door and show you out."

Ed took the letter and departed in silence. Without betraying his disguise, he could not speak. Twice he was on the point of coming out

flatfooted, of pulling off his wig and asking Mr. Framingham if he did not remember him. But some mysterious influence seemed to prevent him from doing this. He passed out of the room and closed the door behind him. Raymond was not visible.

"I'm going right out of this house," muttered Ed. "I ain't going to take any chances. If Mr. Hall wants to do any spying around here, let him try it himself."

This was his first thought, but he reconsidered it when he reached the foot of the stairs. He had promised the detective to use every means of finding out something definite about the house. Here was his chance. It was cowardly for him not to take it. For a moment the boy stood in the lower hall, irresolute. Raymond was nowhere visible. There was another flight of stairs temptingly before him. What lay below them? Ed plucked up courage and determined to chance it and find out. He listened carefully. He peered about the dark hall so dimly lighted by the hanging lamp on the floor above. The coast seemed clear.

Cautiously Ed glided downstairs. Here he found himself in a long dark passage. But there was still another flight of stairs. Below it was lighter. Ed could see another hanging lamp suspended from the ceiling at the foot of the flight. He shot down with all possible speed. What was this—a jail? It looked so. He found himself standing at the entrance to a long narrow corridor. On either side were doors heavily studded with iron nails, with little gratings up near the top. Ed glided along the passage. He kept looking and listening.

Before he had gone far he heard and saw more than he had bargained for. All at once a face appeared at one of the gratings. It was a horrible face; wild, mad eyes, matted hair, pinched, pale features. For an instant the eyes fixed themselves upon Ed. The pallid lips moved as though about to speak, when all at once a piercing scream rang out through the corridor. It was a woman's voice.

"Help! Help! Save me from this dreadful place!" it cried.

But it appealed to Ed in vain, for at the same instant a light flashed farther down the corridor and heavy footsteps were heard approaching. It gave Ed such a scare as he had never known. He shot back and went bounding up the stairs two steps at a time.

"Who's there—who's there?" shouted Raymond's voice behind him. But Ed never answered. He never stopped until he reached the outer door, and then only long enough to open it. There was no difficulty in doing this. Ed had the door unfastened in a second and went rushing down the steps. Here he expected Harry Hall would join him. But he did not. Ed hurried to the tree behind which the detective had hidden, but he wasn't there. He waited and presently saw the man Raymond come to the door and look hurriedly around. In a moment he vanished, and Ed ventured to call the detective's name aloud. But there was no answer. Ed now began to feel seriously alarmed. He felt still more so after a few moments, for he searched everywhere for the detective but could find nothing of him. Much against his inclination, he

hung around the mysterious house for more than an hour. At last, seeing nothing of the detective, he retraced his steps to the ferry and went back to New York.

Ed went to the Old Slip station to find out about Harry Hall, if he was there. But the captain had not seen Hall, but he gave Ed a letter and told him he must return to the house at Communipaw and deliver it to "J. F." So Ed went there again. Wylde was there as well as Raymond and the old man. Wylde asked about the box that Mr. Framingham had given him. Ed denied anything about a box. Raymond pushed a spring near the chimney and a trap opened under Ed's feet and he was dropped into the cellar.

CHAPTER IX.—A Villainous Pair.

"Raymond!"

"Sir?"

"The cigars—my pipe—that fifteen-year-old whisky—quick!"

To hear the old man order Raymond about, one would have fancied he was the Sultan of Turkey or the Shah of Persia. His eyes snapped, and his fingers worked nervously, as he paced up and down the floor. Raymond left the room in a hurry. He was staring at the fireplace, where the trap through which Ed, the errand boy, went tumbling, had just closed.

"Sit down, Wylde! For goodness' sake, sit down!" cried the old man, flinging himself into a chair. "You stand there with your eyes set and your limbs so stiff that it makes me nervous to look at you. What in thunder ails you, anyhow, man?"

Wylde started violently.

"I—I was thinking."

"Of what?"

"Don't ask me; I—look! Do you see it?"

"See what?"

"There! There by the fireplace—coming out through the trap!"

"The trap! Flames and furies, man, the trap is closed!"

"Closed? No, no!"

"Yes! I tell you, yes! What ails you, man? Have you got the horrors? By the living gods, I believe you have!"

For Wylde sank back, and, covering his face with his hands, stood trembling like a leaf, great beads of perspiration standing out upon his brow.

"Yes, it must be the D. T.'s," he muttered. "I have been drinking heavily of late, Mr. Framingham. I—I thought — saw a leopard coming up through the trap. It was creeping—creeping—"

"Stuff! Nonsense!"

"It was real, I tell you—real to me. But it's gone now. Let us talk of something else."

"And what?"

"Raymond, for instance."

"Raymond! What do you mean?"

"Framingham, you see I'm quite myself now. I don't like that man."

"Why, Raymond is the most faithful fellow in the world!"

"You are half blind. You can't see what I see."

"You are crazy drunk! I would trust Raymond."

"Before you would me—I understand. So be it; but let me tell you——"

But Wylde told nothing. For at that moment Raymond entered with the whisky and cigars. He was a curious-looking fellow. We have not particularly described him, nor shall we now, except to mention that he was a man of about forty, whose face was almost hidden by a thick, tangled red beard, which came up within half an inch of his eyes, thus almost meeting his shaggy hair, which hung down to the brows. Such was Raymond—shrewd, cautious, slippery, and alert. He placed the whisky and cigar box upon the table.

"Any orders?" he asked.

"No!" snarled Framingham. "Let the boy sweat till morning. We'll try him then."

Raymond bowed and withdrew. Wylde seized the bottle and poured himself out a huge drink.

"There, I feel better!" he exclaimed.

"It's the stuff that's killing you," said Mr. Framingham, helping himself more sparingly.

He filled his pipe and Wylde lit a cigar. Two villains these. Any one could see it merely by glancing in their faces.

"So you were right about the boy," began Framingham.

"Is surely right as you are his grand uncle, and not your twin brother, his grandfather, as he supposed."

What a roundabout way you have of putting it! Of course I am John Framingham and not my brother Rufus, although he is not the first by many who have been unable to tell us apart.

"I should say not. But to business."

"With all my heart. You say the police are watching us?"

"Sure."

"How do you know?"

"I know. That boy has been playing the spy."

"It looks so."

"It is so. Look here, old man, let me rehearse the situation. We have for years been running the biggest counterfeiting plant in America."

"Well?"

"We want to close the business out now."

"It's pretty well closed out."

"Listen. Your brother is in our hands at last, but stubborn as ever, he refuses to turn his property over to you."

Burn him—yes! He robbed me of my share when we were boys. He——"

"Hold on! Nothing of this kind avails. He will do nothing. His will is made and in the hands of his attorneys, who are moving heaven and earth to find him since the night I spirited him away from Bay Ridge."

"Well?"

"I have knowledge of the contents of that will, for it was at one time deposited with Bagley & Bagley, who were then his bankers."

"Ah! You never told me——"

"Wait! It leaves his real estate entire to his grandniece and yours, Lizzie Linton."

"That is why——"

"Wait! It tells of the strange disposition of

three-quarters of a million ready money which is in the hands of the Brewers' Bank."

"Well, well, I know all that. The boy gets it."

"On proof of his identity."

"The tattooing on his back proves that."

"It does, and as I told you, he must have the check spoken of in the will as buried, but without giving a clue where."

"But we know where now."

"We do, thanks to me."

"No thanks to you! If you had been sharper the boy would never have escaped you that night, and the check would now be in your hands."

"Say nothing. I did the best I could. They are all in our hands now, and with a little patience, we shall win."

"If that confounded old crank, my brother, only feared death, we might force him to make a new will."

"But he doesn't. He wants to die. He dares you to kill him. What we want is the check."

"And we didn't get it. The boy must have given it to some one to keep for him."

"Hark! What was that?"

But it was only the sound of the rising wind which reached their ears.

"What did you think?" asked Wylde.

"I thought I heard some one moving in the hall."

"Pshaw! It is nothing."

"Probably. What is your plan?"

"It is simple. I propose to marry Lizzie and come in for the real estate."

"That's understood."

"I propose to make the boy tell where the check is."

"If you can."

"I will—I must. If it is available, well and good. If not, your brother must be made to write another."

"If we can."

"We must. What fear of death won't do, torture will."

"But——"

"No objections. We have gone too far to retreat. Counterfeiting no longer pays. You know we are so closely watched that we don't dare to make a move."

"I know that."

"But for the money I took from Ben Bagley, which enabled me to pay off the Secret Service detectives, we would now be in the soup."

"It all came from Bagley's stubbornness. He insisted upon drawing out of the business and having his share in cash."

"Well, you paid him, and I got it back again."

"And he got his reward for the trouble he made us."

"Exactly. He had his chance to join us in this scheme to capture your brother's property, and he refused."

"I thought you said he yielded at the last?"

"So he did, just as I was about to throw him overboard, but we had quarreled, and it was too late then."

"Strange that he should have been saved by the very boy you proposed to have him rob."

"It is all strange; but I think we understand one another now."

"We do."

"Shall we get to work at once?"

"In my judgment not a moment should be lost."

"Very good! We'll tackle the girl first."

"You do that. Plead your suit while I go for my brother. Starvation works wonders. He may have reconsidered by this time; at all events, I'll try it on."

They arose and left the room together, John Framingham first putting out the light. What they would have thought could they have entered the room a moment later it is not easy to say. For no sooner had they departed than the curtain from behind which Ralph Wylde had appeared to so startle Ed, the errand boy, was thrust aside and out stepped a man. He stole cautiously into the room, opening the slide of a dark lantern as he advanced.

"Now is my time," he murmured. "If documentary proof of the many crimes of these two villains exists, now is the time to find it; but I must be quick, or goodness only knows how soon they may return."

Who was the man? John Framingham would have seen Raymond, and only Raymond, had he chanced to suddenly return.

CHAPTER X.—Ed's Adventures Underground.

Ed thought the last moment of his life had come. But he was mistaken, as we know. He found it out presently, when he landed upon a pile of feather beds, tremendously scared, but all unharmed. Down came his clothes, flung after him by Wylde. Then the trap-door was heard to close, and all was dark and still.

"Gee!"

Only this one word, and nothing more. Ed scrambled to his feet and caught his breath.

"I'm in for it now," he gasped. "Do they mean to kill me? What place is this?"

He pondered for a moment, listening. But not a sound was to be heard. His first move was to find out where he was. That was clear. Ed remembered that he had matches in his pocket. He picked up his pants, found the matches, and hastened to light one. It showed him a small square enclosure roughly boarded. Over on the other side a lot of old furniture was piled up. The pile of feather beds upon which he stood filled the rest of the space. But the watch showed Ed something else, which pleased him more than all the rest. This was an old lantern hanging suspended from a beam above the pile of furniture. Lighting another match, Ed climbed up and got it. It proved to be filled with oil, and gave an excellent light. This gave the boy courage.

"Good! I'll work out of this," he muttered; "but there's no telling how soon they'll be on to me, so I must be quick."

He hurriedly dressed himself, thinking as he worked. His thoughts ran upon the old man. Was he his grandfather or not? This was what puzzled him, but he made up his mind to puzzle no longer. He had been detected. The only way to save his life was to get out of the house without a moment's loss of time. But first he had to get out of his present prison. Ed tried the boards all around. At last he found a loose one. Against this he flung himself with all his strength. Once! Twice! Three times! Still

again! It yielded! Once more and it was done. The board fell outward, and Ed, lantern in hand, crawled through the space thus opened. He found himself in a narrow corridor. It was the same through which Raymond had chased him on a previous occasion. He was not long in discovering that.

"I know the way out," muttered the boy joyfully, "if I'm not stopped I'll be on the stoop in a moment's time."

He hurried on until he came to the first of the grated doors, his footsteps, in spite of all he could do, echoing hollowly back from the stone walls. Now suddenly came the same sound which had so startled him on the previous occasion. It was a woman's scream.

"Help! You must help me! Oh, let me out! I'm going mad! mad! mad!"

These were the words. Ed stopped. His heart began to beat. Surely there was something very familiar in that voice. A strange fear came over him.

"Hush!" he called. "I'm coming! Hush! You will be heard."

The cries ceased; but Ed had located the sound. It came from behind one of the grated doors further down the corridor on the left. He hurried there, and, holding up the lantern, stood on tip-toe and peered through the grating. The narrow cell into which he looked was vacant. This was not the place after all.

"Where are you?" he called. "Where are you?"

Suddenly a wild, maniacal yell rang out through the place. Again and again it was repeated. It was horrible. Ed, who had moved forward opposite the next door, paused in terror. Then, as the sound died away, a voice spoke almost in his ear:

"Ed! Ed Green! Ed!"

"Lizzie Liston! It can't be! It is! I thought I knew your voice!"

For there was the face of Bagley & Bagley's pretty typewriter looking out at him from behind the grating.

"Lizzie! For heaven's sake, how came you here?"

"It was Mr. Wylde, Ed. He is a villain. He——"

"Stop! I know all about it. I might have thought——"

"But you, Ed! Are you a prisoner in this dreadful place, too? Are——"

"Yes—no! That is, I was, but I won't be long. Don't say a word, Lizzie. Here goes!"

Setting down the lantern, Ed seized the grating and pulled with all his strength. But the door never yielded so much as a hair's-breadth.

"Oh, you can never do it that way, Ed! Never!"

"But I must! Here goes again. No; you're right. It can't be done."

"Never!"

"But what shall I do, Lizzie? To leave you here will be to drive me mad."

"Give me a moment to speak, Ed. Mr. Wylde brought me here. He seized me in the office and drugged me. The next I knew I was in this dreadful place."

"I know, Lizzie, I know."

"But where are we, Ed?"

"Don't you know where this house is?"

"I know nothing about it, as I told you."

"Why, it's in Communipaw."

"Communipaw?"

"Yes."

"Tell me all—all."

"It's no time to talk now, Lizzie, and my story is a long one."

"But—"

Here they were interrupted by that same terrible yell.

"It's going on all the time," said Lizzie. "It is one of the madmen, Ed."

Hurriedly Ed ran over his strange story. Lizzie listened in amazement.

"We must try and be calm," she said. "We must try and be patient. Ed, Mr. Wylde wants to marry me."

"To marry you, Lizzie. Why, he is old enough—"

"I'd rather die than marry him. Ed, if you know the way out go—go now! Bring the police and save me. I shall die or go mad if I stay here another night."

It was so decided. A few hurried words and Ed was off. Wildly the yell rang through the corridor as he ran. As he passed the door where he had seen it before, the same horrible face appeared. Ed caught but a glimpse of it, and it sent him along all the faster. No matter who this poor wretch might be, he could not help him. The boy never stopped until he reached the foot of the stairs. Here he paused to listen. The coast seemed clear, and he hurried up. There was a door at the top of the stairs. It had been open before, but it was closed now. Ed set the lantern down. He felt that every caution was necessary before he opened that door. But before he could touch it the door was suddenly flung open by a hand on the other side. There stood Ralph Wylde.

"Thunder and guns! You again!" he shouted.

Without the slightest hesitation he flung himself upon Ed.

"Look out! Don't you lay a hand on me!" cried the boy.

They clenched, and the next moment went rolling downstairs locked in each other's arms.

CHAPTER XI.—Those Iron Hands Again.

"Take that—and that—and that!"

Ed, the errand boy, was going in his fine work now. He struck out from the shoulder, taking Ralph Wylde under the chin, in the nose, and, lastly, in the pit of the stomach with his head, which sent the villain sprawling on the stones.

"Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!" yelled the madman, further down the corridor. "Kill him before he kills me!"

Had he killed Wylde? The lantern had been extinguished in the fall. When Ed leaped to his feet all was darkness. The boy struck out at random, but every blow told. Had he killed Ralph Wylde? With trembling hand Ed struck a match and looked. Wylde lay there white and silent. But he was still breathing. He was not dead.

"It's only the wind knocked out of him," thought Ed. "This is my chance."

"What is the matter? Oh, what's the matter?" he heard Lizzie's voice call.

But Ed did not answer. Hastily recovering the lantern, he lighted it, listening as he worked. From above there was no sound. Lizzie did not call again. Even the madman's voice was silent now. Ed knew what he wanted. Hurriedly he ran his hands into Wylde's pockets. Here it was—a bunch of keys. With a chuckle of triumph the boy pocketed them, and seizing the villain by the shoulders, dragged him along the corridor, stopping opposite the door of Lizzie's cell.

"Ed, what have you done?" gasped the girl.

"Killed old Wylde, I think, Lizzie. At any rate, I've got his keys."

"Oh, Ed! Is he really dead?"

"No, no! Not yet; but he's unconscious. If he is dead, why, it serves him right."

"But the keys?"

"Hold on! I must have the lantern."

"Run quick! Some one may follow him."

Ed flew down the corridor like the wind. He was back in a minute with the lantern. Ed tried key after key in the door, and finally the bolt clicked, and another moment finished it. Ed stood in the corridor with Bagley & Bagley's pretty typewriter beside him. Ralph Wylde, still unconscious, lay locked within the cell. They hurried on, gained the stairs, and ascended to the main hall. Here Ed extinguished the lantern and paused to listen. Light they no longer needed, for the hanging lamp on the floor above showed them the door.

"This is the way out," breathed Ed. "If I can only open this door as I did before we will be all right."

There was no difficulty in this. Ed worked softly at the locks and bars, and the door moved back. The rush of cool salt air which followed was an immense relief. Lizzie stepped out, and Ed pulled the door softly to behind him.

"My dress!" breathed Lizzie. "Oh, Ed, my dress is caught in the door!"

"Confound it—so it is! Well, I've got the keys still, and like enough one of them will fit this lock."

"Be quick, whatever you do. Oh, do be quick!"

Out came the keys. One by one Ed began trying them in the lock.

"Confound it, will none of them fit?" he murmured. "Perhaps we shall have to cut it after all."

"Do cut it, Ed."

"Hold on! I've got it! There you are!"

Yes, Ed had got it—got more than he bargained for. It was the right key at last. The door flew open. But at the same instant out flew those pitiless hands, catching Lizzie Liston around the waist and clutching her tight in their iron grasp.

CHAPTER XII.—The Three Black Buttons.

Where was Ed, the errand boy? Could it be possible that he would stand quietly by witnessing Lizzie's peril and never making a move in her defense? Hardly! If Ed had been present it is safe to say that the situation at the hall door would not have been as the detective saw it from the head of the stairs. When the iron hands came

something behind the door-jamb. It was the second of the three black buttons. This Harry Hall did not understand, of course. He did not even know of the existence of the three black buttons. But there was no misunderstanding of the result. Deep down under the foundation of the old house the explosion rang out. The result was tremendous. There was a sudden swaying, then a crash! Harry Hall, clutching the banisters, thought for the moment that his end had surely come.

For the old house fell a heap of rubbish upon its foundations. John Framingham vanished with it. But the detective, with nothing but the open air above him, stood holding on to the banisters, for that portion of the stairs to which he clung still hung suspended from a fragment of the wall. It was so also with the front steps, and the bit of flooring upon which Ralph Wylde still stood. A cry of terror burst from the villain. He gave one terrified glance about him, exclaiming:

"Merciful powers! What have I done?"

Instantly he recovered himself and pressed the third black button. The iron hands flew back. Crack! Crack! Quick as a flash Harry Hall drew his revolver and fired twice. At the same instant he gave a flying leap to the floor below.

"Help—help! Save me! Help!" shrieked Lizzie.

Too late! The shots passed Wylde's head harmlessly. He seized Lizzie in his arms, and rushed down the stairs as the detective went flying down among the ruins of the fallen house. Harry Hall had made a miscalculation. He did not come within six inches of the bit of flooring upon which the villain stood.

"Mr. Hall—Mr. Hall!"

Sprawling over a great stone, more dead than alive, the detective heard his name called. He scrambled to his feet. All was darkness now. A suffocating smoke filled the place.

"Mr. Hall—Mr. Hall!"

"Who's calling me?" gasped the detective.

"Here—here! It's Ed—Ed!"

"Ed, the Errand Boy! For heaven's sake where are you?"

"Here, here!"

"Where?"

"Under the stone!"

"Keep cool! Just a second! Now!"

Out came the detective's dark lantern. Fortunately it remained in his pocket unharmed. Its light turned downward shone upon poor Ed. His head and shoulder were visible, but his legs were beneath the stone.

"Oh, Mr. Hall, what has happened? Lizzie—is she safe?" he gasped.

"Wait—not a word—we will save her yet!" breathed Harry. "There—so!"

Placing the lantern upon a fallen beam, Harry Hall put all his strength to the stone. It moved—it raised—it turned over—Ed was free! The detective caught him by the hand and raised him up.

"Are you hurt much?" he asked. "Heavens! Here's another—"

"Bruised, that's all—not a bone broken! Is he dead?"

Brave Ed, thinking not of himself but of some one else as usual. Assisted by the detective, Ed tenderly raised his old employer. One leg was

crushed and he was quite unconscious, but Ben Bagley still breathed.

"He's alive and he may recover," said the detective. "Ed, we must work our way out of this."

"Lizzie, Mr. Hall—Lizzie!"

"Say nothing, Ed. Wylde has got her. Come!"

Ed set his teeth, and stooping, raised Ben Bagley by the shoulders. But the detective pulled him away.

"No, no! We can do nothing for him," he cried. "We must think of ourselves. Don't you see?"

"Great heavens, the ruins are on fire!"

"Yes."

The meaning of the smoke was now only too plain. In the distance, among the rubbish, a tongue of flame could be seen shooting upward.

"This whole place will be in a blaze in a moment," cried the detective. "Ed, I don't know how you came here, but one thing is certain—unless we want to die we must think of ourselves."

"But this is Mr. Bagley. I can't leave him. I—"

"Bagley! By Jove it is!"

"Yes, yes! We must help him, Mr. Hall! He's not dead!"

"Impossible!"

"Not at all. Put him on my back! See the way is open ahead of us! I can carry him. We may be able to save him yet!"

"All right! You're a brave fellow, Ed, and he shan't be left; but I'll do the carrying, my boy."

"Can I get him on your back?"

"You can try. Here, I'll stand against this wall and lean down so. Now, lift him up and try to get him on my back, then you can go ahead with the lantern and keep us from breaking our necks."

Such was the detective's plan. It might have worked if there had been a chance to try it. But there was not. For just as Ed succeeded in raising the unconscious form of Ben Bagley the wall fell inward with a crash. Five minutes later the ruins of the old house were burning fiercely, lighting up Communipaw and the bay for miles around.

CHAPTER XIV.—Captured at the Old Canalers.

"Ed, Ed, Ed!"

"Here I am, Mr. Hall!"

"Safe! Safe at last!"

And Harry Hall, the detective, speaking in a tone of profound relief, leaned down and began to pull. Out from the cellar window before which the detective knelt came Ed, the Errand Boy, pulled by Harry Hall's strong hand. A rush of hot flame followed him. The boy's clothing was actually on fire—one coat sleeve was burning. Harry Hall caught it and rubbed the fire out with his own hands.

"That settles it, boy! We are saved now," he muttered. "Heavens, what a turn it gave me when I saw you drop back there into that fire, after we got poor Bagley out!"

"The stone I was standing on turned under my foot, Mr. Hall. Gee! But it was hot in there!"

"Hot! I believe you. It would have been hotter, though, if we had been pinned under that falling wall, as we might have been just as well as not."

"That was our good luck, Mr. Hall. Strange, but not a stone struck us."

"It was more than luck, boy. We were wonderfully preserved."

"Where's Mr. Bagley?"

"Right here! The crowd is coming; I don't want to be seen, so I lifted him out of the way."

They moved from the burning building to the clump of trees in which Harry Hall had concealed himself on the night of Ed's second visit to the mysterious house. Here lay poor Ben Bagley, still unconscious, but breathing still and most assuredly not dead.

"He owes his life to you, Ed," said the detective. "Only for you I should have left him behind."

"It wouldn't have been right, Mr. Hall."

"No, no, I suppose not."

"But we can't stay here—we mustn't! Lizzie, poor Lizzie, we must think of her."

"Hush! Look!"

The detective pointed toward the burning ruins. Great tongues of flame were beginning to shoot up from the mass of broken beams which lay heaped up upon the foundation walls. In the distance an alarm bell was ringing. Men and boys could be seen running over the flats from Communipaw. At the same instant Ed was startled by six policemen in full uniform, who came around the corner of the house.

"Ah! I thought I heard your tread!" cried the detective, hurrying forward.

"Hall! You here! What in thunder has happened? What does all this mean?" cried one who wore a sergeant's cap.

"It means that the blame thing has blown up, officer."

"Blown up! I should say it had! We were waiting for the signal you promised to give when you wanted us, but instead——"

"Instead you had a signal that every one could hear."

"You bet! Is this the boy?"

"Yes."

"And this man? Is he dead?"

"No! He is one of the victims, sergeant."

"Ah, poor fellow! What is to be done?"

"Let two of your men take him to a place of safety; for yourself and the rest, come with me."

"Now, fortunately for Harry's plan, the sergeant was a man who never stopped to argue matters.

His orders were to assist the detective. If ten houses had been on fire, he would have acted without question just as he did now.

"Brady—Dunn—take charge of that man!" he ordered.

Two policemen hurried to Ben Bagley's side.

"This way! I don't care to be seen by the crowd," said the detective.

He hurried across the flats to the old canal docks, followed by Ed and the officers.

"Ha! There they are!" he suddenly exclaimed, as they approached the water's edge.

Over the canal boats three dark figures were hurrying.

"Down! Down! They are coming to the fire. We'll catch 'em as they leave the boats," the detective breathed.

As they crouched down out of sight Harry Hall quickly explained the situation.

"Heavens! We must catch that scoundrel! He must not be let harm that innocent girl!" the kind-hearted sergeant exclaimed.

"Not if it costs me my life shall he," said Harry Hall.

"If we only knew which way he went!" sighed Ed.

"I know!"

"You do?"

"Yes. Are you blind? Couldn't you see their footsteps in the mud, as we came across the flats?"

"Blest if I saw them," said the sergeant "you detectives are so blame sharp!"

"There's one!"

"By Jove; you're right. Then your theory——"

"They went over these boats. It is no theory, it is fact."

"Then they are as good as captured?"

"I'm not so sure!"

"Why do you say that?"

"Hush! Here they come!"

Quick footsteps were heard crossing the deck of the canal boat in which they were hiding. In a second down jumped a boy. Harry Hall sprang upon him and threw him down in a jiffy. Two others who jumped after him were seized by the police. There was a third who went bounding back over the canal boats and escaped.

"That's Denny Shea!" cried Ed, as the detective pulled his prisoner to his feet.

"Well, who the blazes said it wasn't?" growled Denny.

He glared at Ed.

"So you've turned up again, kid?" he growled. "His nibs told me you were dead."

"You mean Wylde?" cried Harry. "You have seen him?"

"Well, s'pose I have, what then?"

"You will do well to tell it. You will do well to help us all you can."

Denny looked at the detective—from the detective to Ed—from Ed to the police.

"I s'pose the jig is up?" he growled.

"It is."

"I s'pose a feller wot turns State's evidence won't get it in the neck quite so hard as a feller wot don't?"

"If you turn State's evidence and help us I'll see that you are taken care of."

"And dese oder kids?"

"I'll do the best I can for them."

"Well, he kicked me, he did, and I'm blamed if I don't get square on him. Say, is the old man dead?"

"I believe him to be," said the detective.

"In dat case——"

"Come! We must decide quick!"

"I've decided, boss. Come wid me across de canalers and I'll show you de prettiest crib for queer making dat ever you see."

"Good as far as it goes, but what I want of you is something different from that."

"What?"

"You know Ralph Wylde?"

"Well, rather! Didn't I tell you he kicked me just now?"

"He is hiding in the old canaler! There is a girl with him! You will take us to them!"

"He was in de canaler, but he ain't dere now—he's gone!"

"Gone?"

"Yair."

"We'll start now," said the detective.

A moment later and the whole party were hurrying across the flats. The ruins of the house was burning fiercely.

CHAPTER XV.—The Villain Foiled.

"No use!"

"Not a bit!"

"We could never overtake them."

"I'm sure of it."

"Provoking enough, but it can't be helped. What do you propose to do?"

It was the sergeant of the Jersey City police who put the question to Harry Hall. They were standing upon the deck of the canal boat where Ed had first met Denny Shea. Off in the distance a small boat could be seen. There were several persons in it. Denny had assured the detective that Ralph Wylde was one and Lizzie Liston another. They were being pulled to New York by Bilk Brown and some of the other boys. The detective and his party had arrived just in time to be too late.

"What I propose to do is to follow them—whether I can't another, sergeant."

"What means you are going by the ferry?"

"Yes. You will take charge of these boys!"

"Certainly I will. Are you going now?"

"Yes. So long, sergeant! Come, Ed."

As coolly as possible Harry Hall led the way over the decks of the old canal boats. No one would have guessed that the man was half mad with anxiety. Yet such was the case. Ed talked of Lizzie as they hurried across the flats to the Communipaw ferry. But Harry Hall said but little in reply. It was not until they found themselves in the ferryboat that he began to talk.

"I suppose you want to know where we are going, Ed?"

"I trust you, Mr. Hall."

"All you do well! I know just what I am about."

"I saw you questioning Denny Shea while the policemen were ransacking the cabin."

"Yes. What do you suppose he told me, Ed?"

"Don't know."

"You remember that place where you ran against me the time I arrested you?"

"Clancey's on Washington street? Oh, yes!"

"Well, that's it!"

"Did he say Wylde had taken Lizzie there?"

"That's what he thinks."

"And if he lied?"

"Then we're all at sea."

"I hope not—I'm sure I hope not. May I ask you a question, Mr. Hall?"

"A dozen if you wish."

"How came you in that house?"

Harry Hall laughed.

"Why, bought up Raymond," he said. "He instructed me in the mysteries of the place, and I disguised myself to look like him. Did it so well that they never suspected me. I've been there several days."

They were in the slip two minutes later, and in front of Clancey's sailors' boarding house within

five. Hall led the way into an alley which ran alongside the saloon. Here there were six policemen standing.

"Three to the rear to see that there is no escape, three follow me," breathed Harry Hall.

There was a side door leading from the alley into Clancey's hall.

"This way!" he whispered, and they stole upstairs as noiselessly as cats.

Pausing at the door on the landing above, the detective bent his head to listen. But there was no need. For at the same instant a wild scream rang out in a woman's voice.

"No—no! I will never marry you! Help! Help! Help!" was the cry.

Bang! Bang! Crash! Three times Harry Hall flung himself against the door. It yielded at the third blow, and the detective, followed by Ed and the policemen, burst into the room. Clancey, Ralph Wylde, Lizzie Liston and a parson were the occupants. The latter had his prayer book open in his hand, while Lizzie was struggling in the grasp of Wylde.

"Unhand that girl!" shouted the detective, while Ed made a spring for Wylde. Crack! Suddenly a sharp explosion and Wylde, who had drawn a revolver, reeled and fell headlong to the floor.

"Caught in his own net, by thunder!" cried Harry, flinging his arm about the pretty typewriter, "but he would have killed me as well as himself if you had not done it, Ed Green!"

CHAPTER XVI.—Conclusion.

What was it? What had happened? What had Ed, the Errand Boy, done now? Why it was all very simple. Ed saw Ralph Wylde taking aim at Harry Hall and he knocked the villain's hand up just in time to save the detective's life. That was what Ed had done, but as he did it the revolver exploded. It flew into a thousand pieces and Ralph Wylde with his head all cut and bleeding now lay unconscious upon the floor. Was he dead? Harry Hall wondered as he bent down over him. Evidently not, for just then Wylde opened his eyes.

"It's all up with me—I'm a goner," he gasped. "Ed! Come here, Ed!"

Ed was at his side in an instant.

"Ha! You young villain—cause of all my trouble! I wish I could kill you before I die!" the villain hissed.

"But I can't! No, I can't. This is my revenge though. I sent your people away! You'll never find them! Never! Never! Nev——"

The end had come at last.

"Good morning, Ed."

"Good morning, Mr. Hall."

"You are right on time I see. Have you seen Lizzie?"

"I did."

"All right?"

"Oh, yes. A little bit upset, but nothing serious the matter."

"I'm glad of that. I feared for the poor girl's reason when I left her last night. All I've done is the best I could. Now we'll go inside."

It was in front of the Brewers' Bank that this conversation took place on the morning following the adventures just described. As they entered the bank they were greeted by the president.

"You want to come right in here, inspector," he said hurriedly. "I expect Mr. Framingham here at eleven o'clock."

"Is it possible?"

"He had an order signed by his brother for the money."

"Never! His brother is dead. Just before his death he signed such an order, it is true, but that I have with me here. No doubt John Framingham, having lost the original, has executed a forgery; but it makes no difference either way. You know that this money was to be paid to the grandson of Rufus Framingham, Edward Green, providing he could prove his identity by showing the Latin words Nullius Filius, meaning 'nobody's son,' tattooed on his back."

"I know—I know," said the bank president. "And this is the young man. We have met before. We have taken the advice of the best legal authorities and had about made up our minds to pay the money over when you visited us, inspector, and—ah! there comes the man now."

A man with snow-white hair and beard and commanding figure had just entered.

"It is John Framingham himself!" breathed the detective. "Hide us quick!"

They were shown into a little private office, which opened off of the president's room. After a moment's parley with the bank porter, John Framingham was shown into the president's room.

"Good morning, sir," he said haughtily. "I presume you have made up your mind to pay over that money on my brother's order?"

"Well, I can't say that we have, sir," replied the president, slowly.

"What, sir? Do you mean to tell me you refuse?"

"He means, John Framingham!" called a voice from the inner room, "that the \$750,000 deposited in this bank by your brother Rufus, will be paid only to Edward Green, the rightful heir."

"Produce him, sir—produce him if you can!" shouted the old villain, thinking that it was the president who had spoken.

Then to his amazement, out of the inner room came Harry Hall, Ed and the inspector.

"He is here!" said the detective sternly.

"Ha! you!" gasped the old man, and he made a dash for the door.

Instantly Harry Hall collared him, while the inspector himself snapped the handcuffs upon his wrists, saying:

"I arrest you, John Framingham, for counterfeiting the money of the United States!"

* * * * *

This ended it. With the arrest of his grand-uncle, whose method of escape from the burning house was never known, the troubles of Ed, the Errand Boy, came to an end. And why not? The Brewers' Bank paid over the \$750,000. A boy with so much money as Ed now found himself possessed of, has no business to have any troubles at all. And Ed felt that he had none a week later. For then his mother and sister turned up. They had been sent on a fool's errand to a Western city. Three months later found matters much changed. John Framingham went to Sing Sing for counterfeiting. So did the captured boys of the canal boat all but Denny Shea. Ben Bagley, who was certainly mixed up in the business, though to what extent will never be known, might have gone too if he had not taken French leave from the hospital one day after his wounds were nearly healed. Some say Ed Green gave him money before he went and knew that he was going. The body of Rufus Framingham, Ed's grandfather, was never found, although the ^{ec-} of the old house at Communipaw was carefully searched. As Harry Hall was a witness of his death the will deposited with the lawyers of this eccentric old gentleman was presented for probate and in due time Lizzie Liston came in for all the real estate, including the old mansion at Bay Ridge. Shortly afterward Lizzie married Harry Hall, the detective, and Ed and his sister acted as bridesmaid and best man. Having told this we have told everything we have to tell of the trials and triumphs of Ed, the Errand Boy.

Next week's issue will contain "PAWNEE BILL IN OKLAHOMA; OR, FIGHTING WITH THE WHITE CHIEF."

BOY HAS PET BLACK SNAKE

Norman Aungst, twelve years of age, of En-haut, Pa., has a pet black snake six feet long. Everywhere that Norman goes the black snake goes too, coiled around Norman's neck or arm.

While on a camping trip young Aungst met Paul Whistler, who lived on a farm near the camp. They were going through the woods when they spied the snake.

Whistler put his foot on the reptile, and picked it up. He taught Norman how to handle the snake, and when Norman returned to his camp he carried the snake along with him. He is very fond of his new playmate, but the play-mate keeps a safe distance.

CURRENT NEWS

A LATHE FOR PEELING ORANGES

Down in Havana they have an ingenious method of peeling oranges which never fails to amuse the foreign visitor to the Cuban city. Street vendors selling oranges offer to peel the fruit. This they do by placing the orange in a lathe-like device, and then turn the handle until a cutter removes practically all the skin except at the two tips which have served to hold the orange in place. The skin comes off in one long peel, as the crank is turned. The cutter must be frequently resharpened.

A GOOD SHORT STORY

The following is a museum label and is one of the best short stories ever written. For brevity and for conveying accurate information, it is worthy of perpetuation. "Far back in the past, during that period in the world's history known as the Triassic, the State of Connecticut was largely covered by the sea, and a bay, or estuary, extended as far north as Turner's Falls, Mass. One day, when the tide was out, one of the great reptiles, known as Dinosaurs, walked along the beach, leaving his footprints in the sand. The tide came in, the tracks filled with sand and mud; in the ages that followed this became stone, and a few million years later, in quarrying stone for New York houses this track was uncovered."

FISH DRINK MILK

Frank Shelp, of Doster, Mich., who owns a large herd of Jersey cows, has solved the mystery of what happened to his daily supply of milk for the last two weeks. Shelp says that when, after the herd had been driven in from the fields at night, he found just about half of the cows had been milked dry, he thought that either gypsies or summer campers along the shore of Pine Lake were to blame for the wholesale theft.

Farm hands watched the kine for a week but could find no evidence of thefts, but all said that during the afternoon for some reason the milk disappeared. Shelp himself gave up other duties and started to watch the kine. He found that in the afternoon they would go down to the lake to bathe and drink, standing hip deep in the water. It was on one of these trips, he says, that he saw a big fish swim up to the cow and drink her milk. Other fish followed.

Amazed, Shelp says, he knew no one would believe him, and he called summer boarders at the farm to witness the performance. Next a seine was secured and the fish in the basin scooped out. It was found that suckers abounded there, some weighing as much as ten pounds. When he cut open the stomach of several of the fish it was revealed they had participated in the milk orgies.

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The Young Mail Carrier

—OR—

The Dangers Of The Postal Road

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued.)

When he went to the hotel stables he found Black Dick in the finest possible trim and eager to be out again. Looking well to his arms, he mounted the black stallion and rode out of town.

Black Dick was full of running, and it seemed scarcely any time before the vicinity of the buttes was reached. He was just approaching a portion of the road where a grove lined one side of it, when his quick eye caught sight of a number of mounted men coming down from the buttes and headed towards the road on which he was riding.

Tom had been riding close to the trees, and a curve in the road placed the grove partly between him and the men, and he did not think that they had seen him, especially as the trees cast dark shadows in that portion which would make it difficult to observe anything at that distance from the party that was coming down the slope.

Instantly Tom made a dash for the shelter of the grove, and in a moment was safely concealed among the trees. From his secure covert he looked out to where he had seen the mounted men, and they were now near enough for him to see that they numbered about a dozen.

"Something about them seems to suggest that they belong to Dan Despard's gang," he muttered, his eyes fixed on them, "but if they do then what has become of the rest of them? That Despard is a very shrewd man, and it is possible that he may have noted Bill Roberts from afar, noted that the sheriff was fixing to surround him, and sent half of the band to lead the sheriff off on a false trail. That would account for the division of the band, and the chances are more than even that I've guessed right."

He continued to watch the approaching cavalcade as it rode down the slope from the hills, and soon the riders were near enough for him to be sure that they were Despard's men, and a little later he made out the form of the outlaw leader, himself, riding in advance of the troop.

Then he caught sight of something else in the center of the closely grouped riders that at once rivetted his attention.

It was the flutter of a female dress.

Even at that distance he made out the color of the gown and was sure that it was the neat blue riding costume that Betty Cornwallis had worn when she rode with him from Little Medicine.

"The outlaw is clearing out from these parts, and taking the prisoners along with him,"

thought Tom, and then he tried to see where the girl's father was among the band.

He knew Mr. Cornwallis by his build, but although the riders swerved a little here and there as they rode down the slope, and afforded him excellent views of the girl from time to time, he could not see the mine owner, and finally the conviction was forced upon him that, although the girl was with the band, her father was not.

What did it mean?

What disposition had Despard made of Mr. Cornwallis, the prisoner for whom he demanded a hundred thousand dollars ransom?

Tom did not know what to make of it, and thinking deeply over the matter, he continued to watch the approach of the mounted men to the road, and soon they were near enough for him to recognize several faces. Brocky rode near to Betty Cornwallis and held the bridle reins of her horse in one hand.

The party reached the road at a point about a hundred yards from the grove and came to a halt.

Then Despard called Brocky to him and the latter held a brief conversation with him. After that Despard urged his horse alongside the animal on which Betty was mounted, leaned forward suddenly threw one arm around the girl's neck and drew her head forward and quickly kissed her.

The angry blood leaped into Tom's face instantly, and down went his hand to the butt of one of his revolvers, and in that moment he realized how much he thought of the girl. He felt like throwing prudence to the winds and firing upon the outlaw leader, but stayed his hand when he reflected that a shot would not only bring the entire band in pursuit of him, with a chance that he might be riddled with a volley before he could ride out of range, but the idea also entered his head that by giving way to his temper he might spoil what chance there was of serving the girl.

As for the girl herself, there was nothing to stay her hand, and when Dan Despard released her she lifted her arm on high and dealt the rascal such a hearty slap in the face that he reeled in the saddle from the force of the unexpected blow, and from where he sat in the grove the boy could plainly hear the laughter of the men when they saw how their leader had been served.

"Good!" murmured Tom, just as though the girl could hear him. "You're the kind of girl for me."

For one instant Despard glared at the girl as though half-resolved to return the blow she had dealt him, and that made Tom grasp one of his revolvers again, his mind fully made up to fire upon Despard if the latter should dare to strike the girl. If the outlaw leader had entertained any such idea he very quickly abandoned it, and rubbing his cheek where Betty's hand had landed in a solid manner, the captain of the outlaws turned to Brocky and apparently gave him some sort of an order, for an instant later the latter detached himself from the rest of the riders, two more men did the same, and the three rode away to the north, taking Betty with them.

(To be continued.)

FROM ALL POINTS

WILD RICE PLENTY IN OUR NORTHWEST

Tons of rice, as nourishing as the cultivated kind and obtainable for harvesting, is going to waste in marshes of the Northwest. The only persons using it as food are a few Indians and the city epicures, who have it served with wild game dishes. It is on sale in probably half a dozen places in the Northwest.

Wild rice is hard to get at and difficult to harvest. The Indians get it by paddling through swamps and knocking heads and kernels into their canoes. They parch the rice in kettles over a fire of red coals and then shake it vigorously in blankets to loosen the chaff.

So far as known, only two white men in the Northwestern States gather wild rice for commercial purposes. They have a header and cutter attached to flatboats. Their annual output is about 500 bushels, worth \$10 to \$15 a bushel.

LOCUST CLOUD SUN IN RUSSIA

An enormous swarm of locusts has appeared in the Orenburg region, according to a radio despatch sent out from Moscow. It says the swarm is so thick that it screens and darkens the sun. The locusts travel at the rate of about twenty-five miles an hour, it says. However, they have eaten all the grass and grain in several districts in two days.

The radio despatch adds that also there are human locusts working on food trains in the famine district and that tons of thousands of pounds of provisions are missing. Fifty-six men have been sentenced to death in this connection by the revolutionary tribunal and about a thousand others have been sentenced to prison terms. It was stated that at the station of Kochetovka, on the Ryazan-Uralisk railroad, the leakage from food trains is amounting to 20,000 poods monthly.

THE DEEPEST GOLD MINE

The world's deepest gold mine is the Morro Velho, in Brazil, where the Portuguese were first induced to settle by the discovery of the yellow metal. The first gold was discovered in 1699, near the present city of Ouro Preto. The gold was coated with a black substance, and hence was called "auro preto"—black gold. The city which they founded was long called Villa Rica de Ouro Preto—the Rich City of Black Gold—a name which was somewhat cumbersome even for the Portuguese, so they finally shortened it to just Ouro Preto, the name by which it is known to-day. Once it was the most important city in Brazil, the valuable metal being obtained from the gravel of almost every stream in the region.

The great gold vein of the Morro Velho mine is described by Benjamin LeRoy Miller and Joseph T. Eingewald, Jr., in the Bulletin of the Pan-American Union. They compare the vein to a gigantic knife-blade held vertically and thrust into the earth at this angle, with the point still lower than the present deepest workings. And it is these workings that make the mine re-

markable. The combined depths of the connected shafts give a total of 5,824 feet. In other words, here is a gold mine that is being worked at a depth of more than a mile below the surface of the earth.

The rock temperatures increase as the earth's crust is penetrated, in some regions the increase being as much as one degree for each fifty to sixty feet increase in depth. At this rate the temperature at the bottom of this mine would be over 100 degrees higher than at the surface, and fried ham and eggs might be prepared for the miners without any other heating apparatus than the loose rocks lying about. Incidentally, miners would be going through the frying process, too. Fortunately, however, in this mine the rate of increase of temperature is only one degree for every 100 to 120 feet, giving the rocks a temperature of only 112 degrees. By forcing cold air down into the mine by means of fans the temperature is lowered to a little less than 100 degrees. Even at that it is rather snug, and the miners usually wear only shoes, donning trousers when company is expected. The mine has produced a total of about \$55,000,000 worth of gold.

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Found In The Arctic.

By COL. RALPH FENTON.

Carl Denton was a sturdy young American sailor boy, who followed the sea for a living, and was a boat steerer on a whaling vessel out from New Bedford, bound to the Arctic whaling grounds.

He was nineteen years old, brave, handsome and manly, a good sailor, an unerring shot with harpoon or rifle, and a staunch friend.

The vessel had been in the north for three months, and the skipper was thinking seriously of steering to the south, lest a longer stay in the Arctic might result in their being imprisoned in the ice all the long northern winter, if nothing worse happened.

They had made a good catch, and had three or four hundred barrels of oil stored in the hold, besides a large quantity of bone and many valuable skins, for Captain Crawford hunted seals as well as whales when he could find them.

There was room for more oil and bone in the hold, and as the skipper had always gone home with a full vessel, he did not want to do otherwise on this trip.

The men were, of course, ready to fall in with the captain's wishes, although there were two or three old codgers on board who shook their heads, and said that it was better to be content with what they had than to leave their bones to bleach in the northern wilderness.

The winter would set in early, they said, and if the skipper were wise he would turn his back upon the north at once and make all haste to get into warmer waters.

They had seen a good deal of ice, as it was, and more was forming, and before they knew it, if they were not careful, they would be nipped, and then no one knew what might happen.

Carl was somewhat anxious, although he did not join the croakers, for he had lost his father in the Arctic six or seven years before, nothing having been heard of him or his vessel in all that time.

One or two captains in the fleet had warned him not to stay longer, but he had said that he had a good ship and a swift one, and that he would catch up with them long before they had passed through the strait.

So they had sailed away, and from that time his vessel had still been missing, and no one who had since been in the Arctic had heard any word or seen any sign of him.

Carl had given up all hope of seeing his father again, and it had been against his mother's wishes that he had taken a voyage to the north, for the poor woman feared that she would lose him as she had lost her husband, and he was her only support, her other children being too young to be of any help.

The young fellow had laughed away her fears, and had gone to the Arctic, but now, hearing the mutterings of the old sailors, his mind gave him, and he thought that perhaps it would have been better to have taken his mother's advice.

None of the fleet had been seen for several days, and the grumblers declared that their vessel was the only one left on the grounds.

"I suppose you will be going home pretty soon, cap'n?" asked the mate, at dinner.

"Just as soon as I fill up, Mr. Meeks," answered the skipper.

"Ain't you afraid of getting shut up in the ice?"

"Oh, no; she won't close in for some week yet."

"-Pears to me as if it wouldn't be more'n a few days," said the mate, as if to himself, the skipper making no answer.

That very afternoon there were signs that denoted a change. The sky became leaden-hued, the air was colder, and more floating ice appeared.

That night the wind blew from the north, and brought a heavy snowstorm with it. In the morning it was clearer, but the masses of floating ice had increased in number and size.

Early in the forenoon the lookout in the crow's nest, shouted:

"There she blows!"

All was confusion in a moment.

"Clear away the starboard and port boats!" the captain shouted.

"Ay! ay!" cried the men, as they prepared to obey the order, while the lookout came down from his station in the crow's nest.

The latter was a cask, through which the mast passed, fitted with a trap-door in the bottom, by which one could enter it, open at the top, and having grooves on either side into which a board could be fitted to keep off the wind in case it blew too keenly.

There was a platform inside on which one could stand, and a man of ordinary size had only his head and shoulders exposed.

Carl, being the harpooner of the captain's boat, saw that every thing was ready, and then stood waiting for the order to lower.

The whale could now be seen from the deck, his course taking him across the vessel's bow, half a mile distant.

The skipper did not go with the boats, as he usually did, but acted as shipkeeper on this occasion, going into the crow's nest. He wore a heavy coat of fur with a hood that served as a cap, for the wind was apt to blow sharply up aloft, and one needed to be well protected. He carried a telescope, and a signal flag was hoisted on to the haliards to use in case of necessity.

The boats got away at once, the first mate in charge of one, and the second mate having charge of the captain's boat.

The whale was an enormous fellow, and belonged to the bowhead or Greenland species. These are more valuable for their bone, the oil not being so rich or plentiful as that of the sperm whale.

The huge creature had evidently not yet taken alarm at the presence of the boats, for he kept straight on his course, now sending up a double stream of vapor from his blow-holes, and occasionally lashing the water with his large flukes.

The boats left the vessel on a line which would intercept the whale soon after it had crossed the bow, but this course might have to be changed,

and in that case the skipper would signal from the ship which direction the boats should take.

Straight on kept the great cetacean, the boats following the course first laid out.

There was no chance until the whale had almost crossed the course of the vessel, when he suddenly dove under the water, his tail throwing up a shower of spray as he disappeared.

"Better keep straight on, boys," said the second mate, Mr. Thatcher. "The old man will let us know when he comes up, and it's likely he'll take the same track he's on now."

The men pulled strong and steady as before, but it was nearly half an hour before they discovered any signal from the ship.

"There she blows!" cried Carl, turning his head, and a few moments later one of the men said that there were signals from the vessel.

Aloft in the crow's nest, Captain Crawford could see a threatened danger which the men could not, and he signaled to the boats to return.

The ship followed the boats, but the ice kept packing together until the water formed lanes through it, some of these lanes closing up with great rapidity.

It was astonishing where all the ice came from so suddenly.

The captain's boat had given chase as soon as the whale had reappeared, the men pulling a steady stroke, as if determined to overtake him as soon as possible.

"The skipper is signaling for us to come back," muttered Joe, one of the sailors.

"We'll get this fellow in a few minutes," said Mr. Thatcher, "and then we'll go back."

The boat was now close to the whale, and Carl made ready to drive the harpoon into the body of the great creature.

With a quick turn of the steering oar the second mate drew the boat alongside of the whale. Instantly Carl had hauled the heavy iron, standing at the whale's side.

It sank in up to the pole, the whale leaping forward, and churning the waves into foam. The line was made fast, and the mate was about to finish the work of killing the whale, when the wounded cetacean, spouting blood, and breathing heavily, gave a sudden leap forward.

Carl was thrown from the boat, and landed on the back of the leviathan as he shot ahead. The line snapped, and in a few seconds the boat was left far behind.

Carl had struck the whale's back within a foot of the harpoon pole, and he hurriedly threw himself forward and seized it as the line parted. Then he drew himself up to an erect position, and waved one hand to his companions as he was swiftly away.

It was difficult to maintain a foothold on the slippery back of the monster, and Carl dropped down on one knee, the better to maintain his position. He was clothed in fur, and wore boots, which kept out the water, so that he suffered neither from cold nor wet, although his situation was a most dangerous one.

As the whale disappeared a mass of ice in front, hindering the whale's further progress. The huge creature rushed straight at this, and then suddenly stopped.

With a prayer for deliverance on his lips, Carl sprang to his feet and took a flying leap for the ice. He struck it a few feet back from the edge, and carried forward by the impetus of his leap, slid several yards before sinking down exhausted.

There suddenly came a shock, a tremendous rocking, jets of water spurted up to a great height from fissures in the ice, and the whole pack seemed about to be rent asunder. The terrible noise was heard by Carl, who found that he was upon a mass of ice many acres in extent, moving slowly in a direction that he could not determine.

A dark object lying upon the ice at a distance of five or six hundred feet attracted his attention, and he walked toward it. It was the body of a dead whale, a harpoon still protruding from its back close to the hump.

It was quite providential that the body of the dead whale had been thrown where he had found it, for the huge carcass presented a most efficient barrier against the wind, which was now so keen and fierce as scarcely to be withstood.

At last morning dawned. He was hungry, and so, cutting a wedge of blubber from the carcass he managed to eat it, although at another time he would have refused to touch it.

For a week he remained on the ice, eating whale meat, then he was rescued by some Esquimaux, who had discovered the carcass of the whale, and had come out from shore, several leagues across the ice, in their sledges, to obtain the bone and blubber. They took him to their village, nestled at the foot of a great mountain peak, and here a great surprise awaited him.

His father, alive and well, but a prisoner among the Esquimaux, was the first person he met in the village, and the reunion between father and son was almost too joyful to be described.

Captain Denton had been five years with the natives, after having spent a winter in the ice, his ship having been destroyed by fire, and one after another of his men having succumbed to disease or fatalities of one kind and another till at last he was the only remaining survivor of the ill-fated ship's crew.

One day, several months after Carl's perilous ride, the tribe of natives by whom the two white men were held captives, took them with them on an expedition in search of food or spoil, far from their village. They came upon two whaling vessels locked in the ice, in a little cove, sheltered upon all sides from storm and wind.

Carl and his father were gladly ransomed by the whalers, who gave the natives all that they stood in need of in exchange for their captives.

The captain of one of the vessels was accompanied by his wife and daughter, a pretty girl about Carl's age, and the two immediately became great friends, which ripened into something closer than friendship during their enforced stay in the ice.

In the spring, when the vessels were released, and set sail for home, pretty Jennie Butler had promised to be Carl Denton's wife, and when the young whaler returned to New Bedford, like one from the dead, all hope of his being alive having been abandoned, he took with him a father and a sweetheart, and sailed in the Arctic.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 23, 1921.

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

DUCK FEATHERS FOR BAIT

Harry Busby of Philadelphia used duck feathers in the absence of bait to fish in Chesapeake Bay recently and succeeded in hooking forty-two fine rock. His partner, Capt. James Crew of Betterton, caught two fish on crab meat bait.

MOONSHINE PLANT ON TEACHER'S PLATFORM

When citizens of Emerson, Man., spread reports that an old isolated schoolhouse in which mysterious lights were seen was infested with "spirits," they were right. But the spirits were of the moonshine and not the Sir Oliver Lodge variety.

The schoolhouse, which has been sold to a farmer recently, was visited by the police. On the teacher's platform they found a huge still, with a capacity of forty-five to sixty-five gallons daily. The still, nineteen barrels of mash and other paraphernalia were confiscated. Four arrests were made.

DOG SURVIVES SNAKE BITE.

Hunters' tradition declares a rattlesnake's bite will kill a dog as well as a human being. But hunters can be mistaken.

A mongrel belonging to Gordon Welshans of Oriole, Pa., has survived the ordeal, having been struck in the face by a rattler six days ago.

Farmer Welshan's party was picking bucklesberries on the mountain, while the dog roamed among the bushes to hunt out a rabbit or a woodchuck. He disturbed an eight-foot rattler, which bit him in the face. The pickers killed the snake, but the dog, whose face looked as if he had the mumps, disappeared. He has just returned home, a distance of fifteen miles, very much weakened, but will live.

His face was covered with mud, the canine remedy for snake bite, hornet stings and like troubles.

THE AUDACIOUS ENGLISH SPARROW

That astonishing little bandit the London sparrow attracts much more attention at the Zoo than even the bird of paradise. The Zoo, of

course, provides a perpetual banquet, and the sparrow holds no animal in respect. They enter the wolves' cages and sneak their food; they flutter in and out the hyenas' den, and hop unconcernedly among the bears. Constantly they outwit the very monkeys. This spring a pair has actually built a nest inside the lion-house, within a few feet of the tiger's cage. There they feed their young with scraps filched from the cranes and pelicans. Their nest, the keeper explained, was made from the hay wisps stolen from the bison's paddock, near by. The starlings, too, are beginning to follow suit. In the cranes' quarters (writes a correspondent) I saw a glossy pair bring their three youngsters—full grown now—which they fed out of the cranes' food dish. Presently, however, the long-legged bird (who is utterly indifferent to sparrows) rushed furiously toward them, and the whole of the little family took wing in a hurry. We who know the English sparrow (London sparrow, as *The Manchester Guardian* chooses to call it) do not wonder at the bird's boldness, for it is made much of by all the English papers and it is quite true the starling is following fast in the sparrow's footsteps.

LAUGHS

Teacher—What is the difference between "I will hire a taxi, and I have hired a taxi?" Kid—About six dollars and a half.

Crawford—How is it you let your wife have her own way? Crabshaw—I once tried to stop her.

"Oh, dearie, I just thought about asking you to fix the stove pipe for me." "Just thought about it? It's what I call a put-up job."

Inspector in Chicago Police Station—What's your name? Prisoner—Patrick Sweeney. "What nationality are you?" "An Irishman." "What's your business?" "An Italian organ grinder!"

Mrs. Caller—So your husband is out cycling? Why aren't you scouring the country with him on your bicycle? Mrs. Wheeler—Oh, I have to stay home to scour the country off his clothes.

"I thought you were never going to speak to Harold again as long as you lived," said one girl. "I know I said so," replied the other. "It wasn't my fault that I broke the resolution." "How did it happen?" "He called me over the telephone."

Mrs. O'Brien—Sure, a dhrop now an' then a comfort; but aren't ye afraid, Mrs. Hinnessy, ye'll get the habit? Mr. Hinnessy—Niver a bit! Me ould man's been dhrinkin' ut stiddy these for-rtty years past, an' he's niver got the habit.

"Mary, will ye look across th' airshaft now at the pitcher of ice-water the Hanrahans have in the windy?" "It ain't ice at all. It's nothing but a chunk of glass. Oh, the hypocrisy of some people that wants to put on style when they ain't got the price!"

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

WATCH SAVED HIM

A watch, shattered by a bullet fired by one of two robbers who were burglarizing a motor company's storehouse, at Hancock, Md., at 1 o'clock one morning recently, saved the life of Constable Barnhart.

The robber discovered the officer approaching and fired. The bullet, after striking the watch, which Barnhart wore in his vest pocket over his heart, glanced and passed on to the wall.

The watch is one his brother, Arthur Barnhart, carried when he was killed by a bullet six years ago. The burglars escaped.

A CHINCHILLA FARM

The latest Northwest venture is a chinchilla farm, where an attempt is being made to breed these valuable fur bearing animals from South America in a mountain meadow of the Cascade Range, Washington. T. M. Hamlin and W. C. Hamlin, who have been successful in raising them for a starter and are convinced they can successfully raise them in these alpine regions.

The chinchilla, resembling the prairie dog in size and shape, is found in the main range of the Andes of Peru and Chili. Preferring an altitude from 5,000 to 18,000 feet, they will thrive nearer sea level if the climate is dry. They breed twice each year, the ten to twenty offsprings being about the size of mice. In their native haunts they subsist on chinchilla grass, carrots, cabbage and vegetable peelings. It is said they do not require water to drink.

The value of the pelts varies, but those now reported from South America bring from \$50 to \$80 each. An average coat of 270 skins of the chinchilla is valued at from \$15,000 to \$20,000. Owing to the rarity of the fur, it is in big demand from wealthy buyers, and it cannot be imitated by piecing nor by dyeing.

TO MAKE HENS' EGGS HARD

We do not refer to the familiar boiling process, but to a method of making them hard and tough. This is a trick of the trade known to veteran poultrymen. Make up a supply of lime-water, but as though you were using water. Put the eggs in it and let them stand for several days. The lime will penetrate the shell of about a dozen of eggs in a week.

"There is nothing I like," declared a poultryman of many years' experience, "better than soft-shelled eggs in a flock of chickens. It is particularly as this. Lime, of course, is the principal element in the egg shell, and the lime-water supplies it in concentrated form. The eggs will become so hard that you can pour them from a basket just the way you pour water from a pail, and they won't break."

This is a poultry trick you can use on your friends. You can make your flock renowned all over the district for its hard-shelled eggs, and nobody will guess the simple secret.

But ordinarily, soft-shelled eggs in a flock can be detected by other means. Always, of

course, there ought to be ample oyster shell before the flock. Then the feeding of alfalfa or clover is a great help, as these materials contain considerable lime.

It is possible, of course, to have eggs with shells too hard. At the hatching period, shells of only medium thickness are desired, as they can be broken by the chick without undue labor. The danger at other periods is more from soft-shelled eggs, which they can be handled more carefully, which is the case, but because they break easily in the nest and may cause the flock to acquire the egg-eating habit, an exasperating, disagreeable thing to fight.

NON-DRINKING ANIMALS

Camels travel four or five days without drinking, but they are not doing without water all that time. A camel's stomach is peculiarly made, with a number of pouches—"pockets on the sides." Water is stored here when the animal drinks, and he can draw on these "reserve canteens" one at a time for bodily moisture. His keenness in detecting water at incredible distances makes it easy for him to regulate his water rations between drinking places.

Hunters and naturalists say that a giraffe can do without water three or four days. One famous explorer states that in Africa he kept a herd of giraffes under closest observation for a week, and that not one of them drank a single time.

Some of the African antelopes drink but rarely; the eland, in spite of its bulk and fat, goes for weeks without a drink. The hartebeest drinks when water is handy, but goes drinkless without apparent inconvenience when necessary. The klespringer, one of the liveliest of antelopes, and the gerenuk, called by the natives "little camel," are said never to drink. The long-snouted dikdik could not get water even if it so desired; its home is a hot dry thicket which it never leaves. The jerboa, a sort of kangaroo rat, is another curious creature of the Dark Continent that lives entirely without drink—under conditions of heat and dryness that to a man without water would be fatal within forty-eight hours.

According to Dr. Heller, eminent scientist and explorer, autopsies on these non-drinking animals proved them not organically different from other mammals. The most feasible explanation is that of habituation. It is significant that no flesh-eaters (carnivores) are among these "water fasters"; it is probable that they, being more fond of water, have the fluid animals from the lowlands and water-holes back into the high, dry altitudes. As the centuries passed the herbivores developed, by compulsion, a constitutional tolerance of thirst. We will never know how many generations perished prematurely because of insufficient water; but adaptability, that wonderful power God has given to all His creatures, finally triumphed, and evolved the non-drinking animal.

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

SNAKES A SOURCE OF PROFIT

Near Brownsville, Texas, W. A. King conducts one of the largest snake farms in the world, with a hundred hatchers constantly employed. The farm supplies specimens to museums and poison to chemists and medical men. Each rattler yields about a fourth of a tumblerful of the deadly green liquid. Snake oil, as a remedy for rheumatism, brings a good price, and hides and rattles are used in the manufacture of novelties.

MEN FEAR GIRL LINGERIE CLERKS

"The hardest part of my business," said the owner of the women's specialty shop in the business district, "is to get a couple of men clerks to work for me. They are indispensable for worried husbands who come in here to shop during their lunch hour.

"A man hates to order silk stockings or some feminine unmentionables from a girl clerk. He thinks she's laughing at him, and many times he's right, for his confusion. It's different with men attendants. The husbands, as men to men, seem to get along with them very well."

BENEDICTS CAN'T PRESS PANTS AT HOME ANY MORE

"Married men are much better customers when it comes to getting their clothes pressed than are bachelors," said the observant tailor. "That's not particularly because they are more careful of their dress, but because they can't do the pressing themselves after marriage.

"Most single men are experts at trousers pressing. But when a man's married his wife will insist on wielding the iron if it's done in the home at all. Any man knows that a woman can't press a pair of pants. So he sends them to us."

BIG MIRROR AIDS SALES OF CARS

The garage, in its early days, was supposed to be a place strictly for men. Any such femininity as a mirror would have been scorned. But since women have to drive cars this has changed.

"I had the biggest mirror I could find put on the main floor," said the owner of the uptown automobile stable, "and it's no secret that it used to adorn the top of a bar. The women like to view themselves after a windy ride. And it helps me sell second-hand machines. The girls and wives can see how they look at the wheel. It clinches many a sale."

FINDS CASTAWAY ON SOUTH SEA ISLAND

A twentieth century Robinson Crusoe has been discovered by Professor William H. Nobbs of the Geology Department of the University of Michigan, on the island of Kusai, one of the Caroline group.

Professor Nobbs arrived in Manila recently after pursuing his geological investigations in the southeast and reported to Acting Governor Charles E. Yeater that he had found Captain Leander West, of the American bark Horatio,

which was wrecked in 1901 on the Caroline Islands, living on Kusai Island where he is the only white man.

According to the professor, Captain Nobbs was befriended by a native chief and admitted to the chief's tribe, but now he wants to return to the United States. Only five ships, all Japanese, call at the island yearly and Captain West was not able to get passage on any of them. He has been paralyzed for the last year and a half and has not been able to work. He is being supported by the natives.

Governor Yeater said that he would forward to Washington Professor Nobbs' recommendations for the return to the United States of Captain West, who was born in Utica, Ohio.

WRIST WATCH ROILS STRANGE WOMAN

Wrist watches have a harder time keeping the correct time than most other watches. They may be adjusted to four positions, but they are thrust around with such vigor and suddenness that is trying to the insides of the best regulated time-piece.

A woman stepped up to the window of the Grand Central the other day to buy a ticket to Chatham.

"Train departs in two minutes, track 17, and you'll have to hurry," warned the ticket seller.

"Gracious, my watch must be slow, panted the woman as she brushed through the gate.

"Well, it certainly is slow," glared another woman, a perfect stranger to the owner of the watch, as she also raced down the long platform. "I looked at your watch and took my time buying a ticket, and now I've got to run my head off to catch the train."

8-YEAR-OLD CHILD ON 7,000-MILE TRIP

Left alone on Ellis Island by friendly fellow immigrants Hulda Amelia Margareta Larson, eight-year old Swedish girl, began recently a lap of a 7,000-mile trip from Segs, Sweden. On her arrival in San Francisco she will become the adopted child of an uncle and aunt there. Immigrant officers say he will have smashed all records for juvenile long distance journeys.

Little Miss Hulda's aunt, Mrs. John Lindholm, of No. 832 Douglas street, San Francisco, visited her kindred in Sweden last summer and became so attached to Hulda that she proposed adopting her. Arrangements were not completed before Mrs. Lindholm left Sweden, but Hulda said she wasn't afraid to travel alone provided they would let her bring her favorite doll, Lisa.

No mishap befell Hulda and Lisa until they reached Ellis Island, where Hulda hadn't been in detention quarters ten minutes, hugging Lisa tight, before Lisa's head was broken off by the scurrying throng of immigrants.

When she left Ellis Island to take a train the little girl was still clinging to her headless doll, her only companion on her long trip. Both child and doll were tagged with placards telling who they were and to whom they were going.

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BOAT-TRAIN RUNS ON LAND OR

WATER

Experiments with a new system of waterway transport, described alternately as the "amphibious boat" or the "amphibious train," have been successfully carried out on the Willebroeck Canal in Belgium and are described by the Economic Review (London). The object of the system is to overcome transport difficulties on unnavigable portions of rivers, such as rapids, by rendering craft easily transferable to land while loaded and conveying them by rail until their further transport by water again becomes possible. It also contemplates the conveyance of the craft overland from one river or waterway to another.

The inventor is a Belgian, Robert B. Goldschmidt, and it is hoped to make use of the system mainly in the Belgian Congo. The amphibious "boat-train" is described as a series of twin boats or barges, the first of which is the tug, which can be driven by petroleum or palm oil. Each pair of boats is bound together laterally by a double yoke of steel, bearing a hanging device which runs on a mono-rail. The mono-rail is laid on a raised masonry or timber structure.

RHEUMATISM LEFT HIM AS IF BY MAGIC!

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**Now 83 Years,
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Surprise
To Friends**

**Regains
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Goes Out
Fishing
Back to
Business
Laughs at
"URIC
ACID"
How the
"Inner
Mysteries"
Reveals Startling
Facts Overlooked
By Doctors and
Scientists For Centuries**



"I am eighty-three years old and I doctor for rheumatism ever since I came out of the army over fifty years ago," writes J. B. Ashelman. "Like many others, I spent money freely for so-called 'cures', and I have read about 'Uric Acid' until I could almost taste it. I could not sleep nights or walk without pain; my hands were so sore and stiff I could not hold a pen. But now, as if by magic, I am again in active business and can walk with ease or write all day with comfort. Friends are surprised at the change."

HOW IT HAPPENED

Mr. Ashelman is only one of thousands who suffered for years, owing to the general belief in the old, false theory that "Uric Acid" causes rheumatism. This erroneous belief induced him and legions of unfortunate men and women to take wrong treatments. You might just as well attempt to put out a fire with oil as to try and get rid of your rheumatism, neuritis and like complaints, by taking treatments supposed to drive Uric Acid out of your blood and body. Many physicians and scientists now know that Uric Acid never did, never can and never will cause rheumatism; that it is a natural and necessary constituent of the blood; that it is found in every new-born babe; and that without it we could not live!

These statements may seem strange to some folks, who have all along been led to believe in the old "Uric Acid" humbug. It took Mr. Ashelman fifty years to find out this truth. He learned how to get rid of the true cause of his rheumatism, other disorders, and recover his strength from "The Inner Mysteries," a remarkable book now being distributed free by an authority who devoted over twenty years to the scientific study of this particular trouble.

NOTE: If any reader of this magazine wishes the book that reveals these facts regarding the true cause and cure of rheumatism, facts that were overlooked by doctors and scientists for centuries past, simply send a post card or letter to H. P. Clearwater, No. 534 K Street, Hallowell, Maine, and it will be sent by return mail without any charge whatever. Cut out this notice lest you forget! If not a sufferer yourself hand this good news to some afflicted friend.

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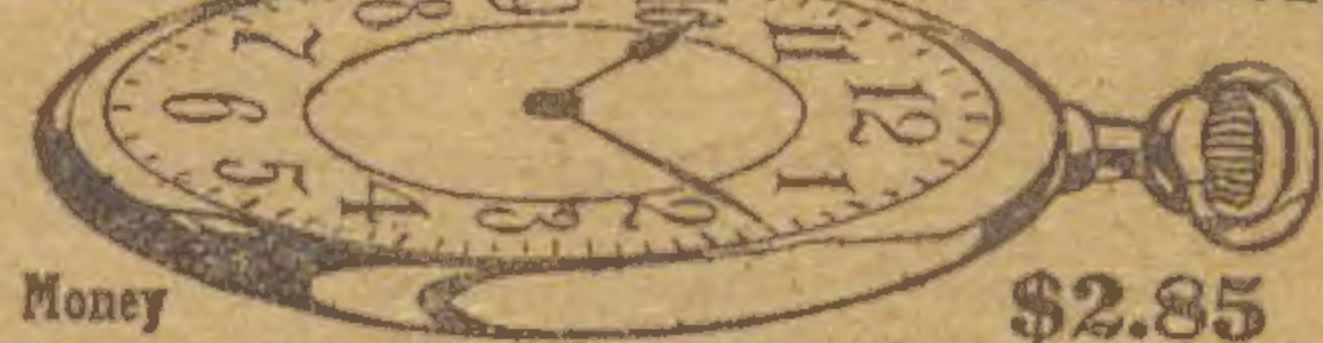
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